

THE  
DEVELOPMENT OF  
*American Philosophy*

A BOOK OF READINGS

WALTER G. MUELDER

*Boston University*

AND

LAURENCE SEARS

*Mills College*



HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

*The Riverside Press Cambridge*

---

TO  
M. G. M.  
AND  
C. K. S.

---

COPYRIGHT, 1940

BY WALTER G. MULLER AND LAURENCE GEARS

THE ILLUSTRATIONS REPRINTED IN THIS BOOK ARE USED BY PERMISSION OF AND SPECIAL  
ARRANGEMENT WITH THE PROPRIETORS OF THEIR RESPECTIVE COPYRIGHTS

PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.



## PREFACE

---

AMERICAN students deserve a usable source-book of the philosophical traditions of their country. Few of these traditions are American born, as everyone knows. Of the European parent philosophies satisfactory anthologies are at hand, but no full-length representation of the philosophical "American Scholar" is available. The editors have prepared this book as a manual of the development of American philosophy from Jonathan Edwards to John Dewey and his younger contemporaries. Through the medium of original sources and carefully selected criticism the student may find here a comprehensive orientation in the philosophical traditions of America. The readings are an answer to classroom needs.

The plan of organization has been to choose longer rather than shorter selections, especially from the more outstanding thinkers. It is desirable that students be introduced to the method and argument as well as to the conclusions of a philosophy, and this can be accomplished only through the use of longer readings. This plan, however, has necessitated the elimination of several authors from the book lest it outgrow all bounds.

Another feature of the plan of the book is to include wherever feasible a critical discussion of a school of thought by an outstanding representative of another point of view. The purpose of this is to help the student to become aware of issues which he might otherwise have missed, to help him develop a sense of philosophical criticism, and to call his attention to the important rôle of criticism in the development of philosophical ideas. The editors have kept this principle in mind in choosing the readings, and critical allusions are frequent.

Each Part is introduced by a short essay relating briefly the cultural background of the period or movement concerned; and the chief sources of thought and the central core of the philosophy of the more important authors represented in the Part. The introductions seek to serve the readings, not to substitute for a secondary manual. Appended to the introductions to Parts are selected bibliographies citing the principal works of the authors included and a few reliable secondary accounts. The biographical facts about the writers are given in short headnotes preceding the first selection from each author.

From beginning to end the preparation of these selections has been a genuinely co-operative enterprise. So far as possible the work has been equally divided, but all basic decisions have been jointly made. Professor Muelder is especially responsible for preparing Parts I, II, V, and VIII; Professor Sears is especially responsible for Parts III, IV, VI, and VII. The editors assume, however, joint responsibility for the entire work.

W. G. M.  
L. S.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

---

THE editors gratefully acknowledge their indebtedness to the following persons, associations, and publishers:

To J. Seelye Bixler, Edgar S. Brightman, John L. Childs, and Herbert W. Schneider for their counsel and encouragement in the preparation of this book. To Thomas Goudge, of the University of Toronto, for suggestions regarding selections from the works of Charles Sanders Peirce. To W. Gordon Ross for helpful criticisms of the Introductions. To Miss Nellie Floyd and John Barrow, of the Berea College Library, in arranging inter-library loans.

To E. S. Brightman for permission to use "An Empirical Approach to God," from *The Philosophical Review*, and for quotations from other articles referred to below. To Sidney Hook for permission to use "What is Materialism?" from *The Journal of Philosophy*. To Arthur O. Lovejoy for permission to use "The Thirteen Pragmatisms," from *The Journal of Philosophy*. To Ralph Barton Perry for permission to use "The Ego-Centric Predicament," from *The Journal of Philosophy*. To William P. Montague for permission to use the "Story of American Realism," from *Philosophy*. To Miss Ida T. Morrison for permission to use "The Failure of Impersonalism," from Borden Parker Bowne, *Personalism*. To Roy Wood Sellars for permission to use "Knowledge and Its Categories," from *Essays in Critical Realism*. To F. J. E. Woodbridge for "Natural Teleology."

To the American Philosophical Association for permission to use William E. Hocking, "Mind and Near-Mind,"<sup>\*</sup> from *Proceedings of the Sixth International Congress of Philosophy*, and for permission to select materials from John Witherspoon, *Lectures on Moral Philosophy*. To E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., for permission to quote from Miss Vida D. Scudder's Introduction of the Everyman edition of *The Journal of John Woolman*. To Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., for permission to use Irving Babbitt, "Humanism, An Essay at Definition," from N. Foerster (ed.), *Humanism and America*. To Harvard University Press for permission to use selections from Volume I and Volume V of Hartshorne and Weiss (eds.), *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*. To Henry Holt and Company for permission to use materials by John Dewey from *Creative Intelligence* and *Human Nature and Conduct*, by William James from *Principles of Psychology* and for permission to quote from H. W. Schneider, *The Puritan Mind*, and from I. W. Riley, *American Thought*. To Houghton Mifflin Company for permission to use Josiah Royce, "The Possibility of Error," from *The Religious Aspects of Philosophy*, and selections from *Through Nature to God* by John Fiske. To *The Journal of Philosophy* for permission to use Sidney Hook, "What is Materialism?," Arthur O. Lovejoy, "The Thirteen Pragmatisms," and Ralph Barton Perry, "The Ego-Centric Predicament." To Little, Brown and Company for permission to use selections from R. B. Perry, *The Thought and Character of William James*, Volume II. To Longmans, Green and Company for permission to use selections from William James in *The Will to Believe*, *Some Problems of Philosophy*, and *Pragmatism*. To The Macmillan Com-

<sup>\*</sup> Exact page references to this and other selections may be found on first pages of selections.

pany for permission to use selections from J. E. Boodin, "God and Cosmic Structure," in Barrett (ed.), *Contemporary Idealism in America*; for permission to use G. H. Howison, "The Limits of Evolution," from volume by the same title; for permission to use *Knowledge and Its Categories*, by Roy Wood Sellars. To W. W. Norton Company for permission to use material from Dewey, *Experience and Nature*. To *The Philosophical Review* for permission to use Josiah Royce, "The Eternal and the Practical"; James E. Creighton, "Two Types of Idealism," and E. S. Brightman, "An Empirical Approach to God." To Princeton University Press for permission to use selections from John Witherspoon, *Lectures on Moral Philosophy*. To Charles Scribner's Sons for permission to use writings of George Santayana in *Winds of Doctrine*, *Reason in Common Sense*, and *Reason in Religion*; for permission to use F. J. E. Woodbridge, "Natural Teleology," from *Nature and Mind*. To the University of Chicago Press for permission to use G. H. Mead, "The Philosophies of Royce, James, and Dewey in their American Setting," from *The International Journal of Ethics*; and for permission to quote from B. T. Schantz, "Ethan Allen's Religious Ideas," from *The Journal of Religion*.

WALTER G. MUELLER  
LAURENCE SEARS

## CONTENTS

---

### *Part One*

#### EARLY PHILOSOPHICAL THEOLOGY AND IDEALISM

Introduction . . . . .	i
------------------------	---

#### JONATHAN EDWARDS

Notes on the Mind . . . . .	9
God Glorified in Man's Dependence . . . . .	16
A Divine and Supernatural Light . . . . .	25
The Insufficiency of Reason as a Substitute for Revelation . . . . .	29
Freedom of the Will . . . . .	37

#### SAMUEL JOHNSON

Noetica: or the First Principles of Metaphysics and Logic . . . . .	42
Ethics: or Moral Philosophy . . . . .	47

#### JOHN WOOLMAN

The Journal of John Woolman . . . . .	54
Considerations on Pure Wisdom and Human Policy . . . . .	57
On Silent Worship . . . . .	59
Considerations on the True Harmony of Mankind . . . . .	60

### *Part Two*

#### THE PERIOD OF THE AMERICAN ENLIGHTENMENT

Introduction . . . . .	65
------------------------	----

#### BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Articles of Belief and Acts of Religion . . . . .	72
Advice to a Young Tradesman . . . . .	73
To Thomas Paine . . . . .	74
To Ezra Stiles . . . . .	75

#### THOMAS JEFFERSON

To Doctor Benjamin Rush . . . . .	76
To John Adams . . . . .	79
To John Adams . . . . .	80

#### ELIHU PALMER

Principles of the Deistical Society of the State of New York . . . . .	82
--	----

#### ETHAN ALLEN

Reason the Only Oracle of Man . . . . .	84
---	----

## THOMAS PAINE

The Age of Reason . . . . . 94

## JOHN WITHERSPOON

Lectures on Moral Philosophy . . . . . 104

*Part Three*

## TRANSCENDENTALISM

Introduction . . . . . III

## WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING

Unitarian Christianity . . . . . 117

## THEODORE PARKER

Transcendentalism . . . . . 130

## RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Nature . . . . . 140

The American Scholar . . . . . 152

Self-Reliance . . . . . 162

## HENRY DAVID THOREAU

Civil Disobedience . . . . . 168

## WALT WHITMAN

Democratic Vistas . . . . . 173

## GEORGE SANTAYANA

The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy . . . . . 179

*Part Four*

## EVOLUTION

Introduction . . . . . 191

## SIMON NEWCOMB, NOAH PORTER, JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE, JAMES MCCOSH

A Symposium: Law and Design in Nature . . . . . 195

## JOHN FISKE

Through Nature to God . . . . . 210

*Part Five*

## IDEALISM FROM WILLIAM T. HARRIS TO JAMES E. CREIGHTON

Introduction . . . . . 217

## WILLIAM T. HARRIS

Preface, The Journal of Speculative Philosophy, Vol. 1, No. 1 . . . . . 227

The Speculative . . . . . 228

Preface, The Journal of Speculative Philosophy, Vol. 1, No. 4 . . . . . 232

JOSIAH ROYCE	
The Possibility of Error . . . . .	234
The Eternal and the Practical . . . . .	246
GEORGE H. HOWISON	
The Limits of Evolution . . . . .	262
BORDEN PARKER BOWNE	
The Failure of Impersonalism . . . . .	278
JAMES EDWIN CREIGHTON	
Two Types of Idealism . . . . .	291
RALPH BARTON PERRY	
The Ego-Centric Predicament . . . . .	304

*Part Six*

PRAGMATISM AND CRITICAL EMPIRICISM

Introduction . . . . .	311
GEORGE HERBERT MEAD	
The Philosophies of Royce, James, and Dewey in their American Setting .	319
CHARLES SANDERS PEIRCE	
Preface to Principles of Philosophy . . . . .	330
Notes on Scientific Philosophy . . . . .	332
Fallibilism, Continuity, and Evolution . . . . .	333
How to Make Our Ideas Clear . . . . .	341
Pragmatism . . . . .	347
WILLIAM JAMES	
The Principles of Psychology . . . . .	349
Does "Consciousness" Exist? . . . . .	351
The Meaning of Truth . . . . .	353
The Problems of Metaphysics . . . . .	357
Percept and Concept — the Import of Concepts . . . . .	359
The One and the Many — Values and Defects . . . . .	365
Pragmatism and Religion . . . . .	368
The Will to Believe . . . . .	370
Will . . . . .	375
✓ JOHN DEWEY	
The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy . . . . .	376
Introduction to Human Nature and Conduct . . . . .	390
The Place of Habit in Conduct . . . . .	395

What is Freedom? . . . . .	398
Existence and Value . . . . .	402
Experience, Nature and Art . . . . .	403
ARTHUR O. LOVEJOY	
The Thirteen Pragmatisms . . . . .	404
<i>Part Seven</i>	
REALISM AND NATURALISM	
Introduction . . . . .	411
WILLIAM PEPPERELL MONTAGUE	
The Story of American Realism . . . . .	419
ROY WOOD SELLARS	
Knowledge and Its Categories . . . . .	431
FREDERICK J. E. WOODBRIDGE	
Natural Teleology . . . . .	441
GEORGE SANTAYANA	
On the Relative Value of Things and Ideas . . . . .	453
How Thought is Practical . . . . .	458
How Religion May Be an Embodiment of Reason . . . . .	460
Preface to Realms of Being . . . . .	466
Correspondence of William James and George Santayana . . . . .	472
IRVING BABBITT	
Humanism: An Essay at Definition . . . . .	475
<i>Part Eight</i>	
RECENT PERSPECTIVES IN AMERICAN IDEALISM	
Introduction . . . . .	485
WILLIAM ERNEST HOCKING	
Mind and Near-Mind . . . . .	491
JOHN ELOF BOODIN	
God and Cosmic Structure . . . . .	500
EDGAR SHEFFIELD BRIGHTMAN	
An Empirical Approach to God . . . . .	510
SIDNEY HOOK	
What is Materialism? . . . . .	523
INDEX . . . . .	529



## PART ONE

### *Early Philosophical Theology and Idealism*

---

EARLY New England thinking is a twig on the Protestant branch of the Augustinian branch of the Mediaeval tree of knowledge. The first American philosophical thinkers debated the same issues which St. Augustine raised in the fifth century. They had a practical zeal to build a City of God in America, a Holy Commonwealth, to use Baxter's term. While some of the materials at hand to build such a City might have seemed strange to the Bishop of Hippo, he would have understood every theological issue involved. More certain of the reality of God's will than of the possibility of man's understanding it, the Puritan Mind, like Augustine's, would reflect: "If you are not able to know, believe that you may know. Faith precedes; the intellect follows." And as an authority for faith there is the revealed infallible Word of God, a Word more fanatically to be followed in the seventeenth than in the fifth century. To Augustine the Puritans owed many ideas. God is an absolute personal sovereign, whose will is never thwarted. He creates man out of nothing. And He subjects man to a law which he is doomed to disobey. Man is therefore tainted with original sin. Without divine help he cannot be saved; indeed, he cannot even choose God and live for Him without His act of grace. Grace is bestowed freely without regard to human merit, and it is bestowed on those whom God elects. Grace is irresistible. There is divine predestination, but, Augustine insists, it does not interfere with human freedom because freedom means freedom from evil. He is most truly free who is not free to do wrong. Through grace man receives Eternal Life whose benefits are twofold, the knowledge and the enjoyment of God, on the one hand, and the restoration of harmony between man's will and the Will of God, on the other. Such blessedness continues in life after death but has its beginnings here in "the communion of saints" or church order.

The form in which this Augustinian tradition was known to the New England Puritans was the theology of Calvin modified by English and Dutch Platonism. The famous five points were: (a) divine providence, (b) human depravity, (c) efficacious grace, (d) divine election, and (e) the perseverance of the saints. These five doctrines were associated in the minds of Christians with five other supplementary, though less distinctive, emphases which rounded out the theological point of view of the times: (1) the infallibility of the Bible, (2) the Virgin Birth as a necessary condition for the complete deity of Christ, (3) the substitutionary atonement, (4) the resurrection of the body, and (5) the second

coming of Christ. These points were all later to be challenged by both the Deists and the Unitarians.

The mediaeval tradition, in which Calvinism was rooted, so emphasized "spiritual" matters that it was thought a waste of time to enquire extensively into the natural causes of things and events. Since the Scriptures were regarded as infallible and sufficient for a knowledge of salvation, research into nature was conducted in the light of the divine, "archetypal art." This tradition controlled the minds of those who came to found the Holy Commonwealth. The theory of salvation was the social philosophy of New England, and continued to haunt the Puritan Mind long after Congregationalism had been subordinated to other concerns. Thousands of the early colonists did not come to found the Holy Commonwealth. They came to fish. Their minds were full of "the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in." There developed a "loss of the sense of sin" as Herbert W. Schneider has so well described it.<sup>1</sup> There came the "Half-Way Covenant" and other compromises with "worldly" interests. As in England, by 1700 Puritanism was being transformed into Whigism. By the third generation a full-blown crisis in the New England congregations and in the Calvinist theology itself had developed. Orthodoxy was on the defensive.

America's first real philosopher was the champion of the old theological order in terms of the new philosophy of Newton and Locke. To the performance of his task he brought the latest philosophical weapons plus the Newtonian philosophy of science; the works of the Cambridge Platonists,<sup>2</sup> the Essay of John Locke; and his own genius in metaphysics as well as his own intense emotional life, which was stimulated by the literature of continental pietism.

Edwards's philosophy developed early. Under the direction of Samuel Johnson he was introduced to Locke's famous *Essay Concerning the Human Understanding*. It made a tremendous impression on Edwards and gave more pleasure "than the most greedy miser finds, when gathering up handfuls of silver and gold, from some newly discovered treasure." Edwards developed some of the implications of the Essay in his "Notes on the Mind." The new position is a thorough-going spiritualistic metaphysics, roughly analogous to that of George Berkeley. The world is conceived to be an ideal order of mental reality. It is impossible, says Edwards, that the world should exist from Eternity without a Mind. Existence is, thus, mental in nature. But the view that the real is an eternal all-comprehending Mind does not preclude accepting the findings of natural science. "To find out the reasons of things, in Natural Philosophy, is only to find out the proportion of God's acting." In this way Edwards was able to interpret the new discoveries of Newton.

These ideas were worked out as a philosophical system before he was converted to Calvinistic pietism. By his conversion they were transformed into a theory of religious experience or "sense." The conversion brought with it a new attitude towards the doctrine of God's sovereignty which, he says,

<sup>1</sup> See *The Puritan Mind*, chap. III. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1930.

<sup>2</sup> There is much in Edwards which resembles Plato, Spinoza, Cudworth, More, Norris, Whichcote, and Culverwel. It must be remembered that both Newton and the Congregationalist theologians grew out of Cambridge Platonism. Cf. Perry Miller, *The New England Mind*.

used to appear like a horrible doctrine to me. But I remember the time very well, when I seemed to be convinced, and fully satisfied, as to the sovereignty of God, and his justice in thus eternally disposing of men, according to his sovereign pleasure . . . and there has been a wonderful alteration in my mind, in respect to the doctrine of God's sovereignty, from that day to this; so that I scarce ever have found as much as the rising doubt of an objection against it, in the most absolute sense, in God's shewing mercy to whom he will shew mercy, and hardening whom he will . . . I have often since had not only a conviction, but a delightful conviction. The doctrine has very often appeared exceeding pleasant, bright, and sweet. Absolute sovereignty is what I love to ascribe to God.<sup>1</sup>

This fundamental tenet of God's sovereignty found utterance in a famous sermon entitled "God Glorified in Man's Dependence." The sermon was delivered in Boston in July, 1731, and was then published at the request of several ministers who heard it. They saw in its author the promise of a great defender of the Calvinist faith, then under attack from many quarters.<sup>2</sup>

Edwards's greatest philosophical work is *The Freedom of the Will*. It was written while Edwards was at the pioneer settlement of Stockbridge as a resident missionary to the Indians. The book is a brilliant attack against the Arminians who were gradually but steadily gaining ground in the New England colonies. The literature of this period is full of the free-will controversy, re-echoing at many points the debates in England from Thomas Hobbes to John Locke. The basic postulate on which Edwards rests his case is this:

I assert that nothing ever comes to pass without a cause. . . . That whatsoever begins to be which before was not, must have a cause why it then begins to exist, seems to be the first dictate of the common and natural sense which God hath implanted in the minds of all mankind, and the main foundation of all our reasonings about the existence of things, past, present, or to come.

Applied to the free-will controversy this principle results in the view that we are free to do as we please but we are not free to please as we please. Edwards made a closer identification of will and desire, volition and inclination, than he understood Locke to have made. Edwards says that a man never, in any instance, wills anything contrary to his desires, or desires anything contrary to his will. What determines the will is that motive, "which, as it stands in the view of the mind, is the strongest." The motive is the whole of that which moves, excites or invites the mind to volition, whether that be one thing singly, or many things conjunctly. While the motive must be perceived in the mind's view, i.e., thought of, it is not always the case that the will follows the last dictate of the Understanding (considered as reason). There are other influences in the scales besides thinking. Edwards's argument was a powerful weapon in the defense of Calvinism.

<sup>1</sup> See his *Personal Narrative*.

<sup>2</sup> "We cannot but express our joy and thankfulness, that the great Head of the Church is pleased still to raise up, from among the children of his people, for the supply of his churches, those who assert and maintain these evangelical principles; and that our churches, notwithstanding all their degeneracies, have still a high value for just principles, and for those who publicly own and teach them." Cited in Sereno Edwards Dwight, *The Works of President Edwards: With a Memoir of His Life* (1830), p. 119.

Edwards, however, was not just another Calvinist. In a sermon preached in 1734 he presented a doctrine which transformed his Puritan Platonism into a supernaturalistic empiricism. This sermon was called "A Divine and Supernatural Light, Immediately Imparted to the Soul by the Spirit of God, Shown to be both a Scriptural, and a Rational Doctrine." This sermon is the positive side of his philosophy, which is more commonly known in its negative form in the "Sinners in the Hand of an Angry God." The Spirit of God, he says, acts in the mind of a saint as an indwelling vital principle. God exerts his own nature in the exercise of the faculties of the godly. The spiritual and divine light does not consist in any impressions made upon the imagination. Neither is this light "the suggesting of any new truths or propositions not contained in the word of God." Positively, it consists in a "true sense of the divine and superlative excellency of the things of religion. . . . There is not only a rational belief that God is holy, and that holiness is a good thing, but there is a sense of the loveliness of God's holiness." This sense brings with it a conviction of the truth and reality of the things contained in the word of God.<sup>2</sup>

As a defender of Calvinism, Edwards comes to grips with the rival claims of revelation and reason as ultimate authority for human life. The selection below, "The Insufficiency of Reason as a Substitute for Revelation," shows by its title the position which is defended. The limitations of rationalism are indicated and Edwards points to the fact that in all thinking we are driven back to propositions and judgments which are not capable of rational demonstration. The reader will find this essay differing sharply from Allen's view that reason is the only oracle of man. Edwards holds that the light of nature and the law of nature are insufficient to discover or to establish true religion, and he defends the supernatural presence of God in sense experience.

In his later years he composed an essay on *The Nature of True Virtue*. Here Edwards combines his earliest Platonism with his pietistic doctrine of love. He develops a moral idealism independent of Locke's theory of knowledge, based on a Platonic esthetics. Excellence is a matter of harmony, and virtue is the "consent to Universal Being" or "love to Being."

The idealism of Edwards was largely the work of his own genius. The idealism of Samuel Johnson was directly dependent on the philosophy of Berkeley. Beginning as a Congregational minister, Johnson early revolted and allied himself with the Anglican Church. Johnson's most mature contribution to philosophy is the *Elementa Philosophica* (1752). It was printed on the press of Benjamin Franklin and was used in his academy for some time. The book reflects the philosophies of Wollaston and Berkeley, to whom it is also dedicated. Samuel Johnson is responsible for introducing Berkeleian idealism into the educational life of Colonial America. He has also the distinction of being the first regular college professor of philosophy in America. One motive for Johnson's acceptance of Berkeley's philosophy was the former's fear of the teachings of Isaac Newton. These, newly introduced into the colonies, were feeding a necessitarian Deism,

<sup>2</sup> See C. H. Faust and T. H. Johnson, *Jonathan Edwards*, xxxii-xxxvi. Cf. A. C. McGiffert, *Jonathan Edwards*, pp. 52-89. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1932, also, H. G. Townsend, "An Alogical Element in the Philosophy of Edwards," in Gilbert Ryle, editor, *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1931.

which Johnson greatly disliked. Berkeley's position made room for both pluralism and freedom, as well as for Newton's science. In his *Ethics* Johnson tends towards perfectionism, defining happiness as the complete realization of all the capacities of the soul. He reduces the whole conception of ethics to "that grand ancient principle of true wisdom, *Know thyself* . . . for this is the knowledge of ourselves in the whole."

Colonial America did not receive the *Elementa Philosophica* very well. The various reactions are informing:

The Anglican clergy [of whom Johnson was one] were neither competent nor interested in technical philosophy. Scientists and natural philosophers, like Franklin and Colden, regarded it as merely ingenious and too fantastic. Calvinists could not tolerate his Arminianism and Anglican Propaganda. Schools and Academies preferred Paley. Liberals branded his enthusiasm for Hebrew and Hutchinsonianism as fanatical.<sup>1</sup>

However, Johnson's perfectionism and his comments friendly to Arminian free-will became quite popular, though their popularity was fed also by sources uncongenial to him. In fact, Johnson scarcely relished the equivocations which were spawned in the popular mind, making of free-will free-thought, and making of his stress on moral responsibility an enthusiasm for political liberty.

While the Holy Commonwealth of Puritanism was undergoing its rise and decline in New England, another adventure in Christian community life was taking place in Pennsylvania. Through the person and activity of William Penn the Society of Friends had the opportunity of forming a State and a society on the basis of what they conceived to be a true Christian ethic. The "Holy Experiment" was a state without compulsory religious organizations and with complete separation of Church and State. The Quakers being in the majority continually re-elected their members to public office. For about seventy years Quaker ideals of friendly arbitration, non-legal methods of settling disputes, non-participation in war, love of the brethren, charity towards the poor, and the like, were exercised with relatively few compromises. In time, constituted authority with its coercive methods of social control was recognized in certain limited areas. However, this Christian State went to pieces finally over the problems of war and religious toleration when the colony was forced by the Mother Country to take part in the war between England and France. The Quakers lost their power to other groups when they refused to take part in the administration of the colony, in order to avoid consenting to the imposition of war taxes.<sup>2</sup> Later, in the War of Independence the Quakers were largely non-participants in the struggle.

There is in the history of the Society of Friends both sensitive humanitarianism and a strain of passivism, quietism, and pietism. In John Woolman we see combined the individualism of personal piety and a growing sense of social issues in the forms of slavery, labor exploitation, and war. His constant waiting upon the Lord for guidance indicates the passivist quality in his religious experience, though his concern for humanity is more commonly celebrated. Vida Scudder says that Woolman's experience "may be said to

<sup>1</sup> Herbert W. Schneider, *The Puritan Mind*, pp. 182-183 (slightly condensed).

<sup>2</sup> See E. Troeltsch, *The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches*, vol. II, pp. 780-784. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1931.

mark the exact point where the individualism of the Puritan age broke down, unable to stand the strain of the growing sense of social solidarity."<sup>1</sup> This growing sense of solidarity and of inter-colonial consciousness was partially inspired by Edwards through the workings of the Great Awakening. On the other hand Woolman was also quite an individualist and his Quaker methods made for resistance at times to constituted authority and developed a high degree of democracy among the Friends.

The source of Woolman's way of living is the "inner light." Early American idealism had learned in Edwards to wear the "saintly" garb of the Calvinist, and in Johnson to wear the vestments of Anglican apostolic succession, but in John Woolman idealism wore the garments (undyed garments) of Quaker simplicity. He was not a school philosopher, nor even a non-academic philosopher like Edwards before him or Emerson later, yet he represents a type of philosophical thinking which has been significant. Woolman is singularly insistent on waiting for those "openings" and "risings" from God which guide the conduct of life in every situation where divine help is sought. God was for him an invisible spiritual being who speaks directly in man with definite and specific promptings, supplementing man's natural knowledge. Woolman teaches waiting for and following the "inward drawings" which come from God's indwelling presence. In its specific directness the work of the "inner light" must be distinguished from Edwards's "divine and supernatural light." At this point Woolman is much closer to the thought of Emerson.

The contemporaries of Woolman, Johnson, and Edwards were developing points of view which ran at cross-currents with the idealisms which we have thus far sketched. Edwards and Franklin, for example, are full contemporaries, yet the former is an anachronism in the age of Franklin. To the latter and his associates of the Enlightenment we shall reserve therefore a separate discussion.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### I. General Works:

- BALDWIN, J. M., editor, *DICTIONARY OF PHILOSOPHY AND PSYCHOLOGY*. 2 vols. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1901-02.
- CELL, G. C., "DIE PHILOSOPHIE IN NORD AMERIKA," in F. Ueberweg, *GESCHICHTE DER PHILOSOPHIE*, Bd. 5, Hrsg. von T. K. Oesterreich. Berlin: Mittler and Sohn, 1928.
- JOHNSON, ALLEN, editor, *DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN BIOGRAPHY*. 20 vols. and index. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928-37.
- MÜLLER, G. E., *AMERIKANISCHE PHILOSOPHIE*. Stuttgart, Germany: Fr. Frommanns Verlag, 1936.
- PARRINGTON, V. L., *MAIN CURRENTS IN AMERICAN THOUGHT*. 3 vols. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1927-30. Vol. I, *THE COLONIAL MIND*; vol. II, *THE ROMANTIC REVOLUTION IN AMERICA*; vol. III, *THE BEGINNINGS OF CRITICAL REALISM IN AMERICA*.
- RILEY, I. W., *AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY: THE EARLY SCHOOLS*. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1907.
- RILEY, I. W., *AMERICAN THOUGHT FROM PURITANISM TO PRAGMATISM AND BEYOND*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1915; second edition, 1923.
- TOWNSEND, H. G., *PHILOSOPHICAL IDEAS IN THE UNITED STATES*. New York: American Book Company, 1934.

<sup>1</sup> "Introduction," *The Journal of John Woolman*.

## II. Primary Sources for the Colonial Period:

EDWARDS, JONATHAN, THE WORKS OF PRESIDENT EDWARDS: WITH A MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE. 10 vols. S. E. Dwight, editor. New York: 1829-1830.

THE PRINCIPAL WORKS OF JONATHAN EDWARDS:

Sermon: "GOD GLORIFIED IN MAN'S DEPENDENCE," 1731.

Sermon: "A DIVINE AND SUPERNATURAL LIGHT," 1734.

A FAITHFUL NARRATIVE OF THE SURPRISING WORK OF GOD, 1737.

SOME THOUGHTS CONCERNING THE PRESENT REVIVAL OF RELIGION IN NEW ENGLAND, 1742.

TREATISE CONCERNING RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS, 1746.

A CAREFUL AND STRICT ENQUIRY INTO THE MODERN PREVAILING NOTIONS OF THAT FREEDOM OF WILL WHICH IS SUPPOSED TO BE ESSENTIAL TO MORAL AGENCY, VIRTUE AND VICE, REWARD AND PUNISHMENT, PRAISE AND BLAME, 1754.

TWO DISSERTATIONS: THE NATURE OF TRUE VIRTUE AND THE END FOR WHICH GOD CREATED THE WORLD, 1755.

THE GREAT CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF ORIGINAL SIN DEFENDED, 1758.

FAUST, C. H., and T. H. JOHNSON, JONATHAN EDWARDS: REPRESENTATIVE SELECTIONS WITH INTRODUCTION, BIBLIOGRAPHY, AND NOTES. New York: American Book Company, 1935.

JOHNSON, SAMUEL, ELEMENTA PHILOSOPHICA, 1752.

SCHNEIDER, HERBERT AND CARROLL, editors, SAMUEL JOHNSON, PRESIDENT OF KING'S COLLEGE, HIS CAREER AND WRITINGS. 4 vols. New York: Columbia University Press, 1929. "THE MIND OF SAMUEL JOHNSON," the Introduction to vol. II, is by H. W. SCHNEIDER.

WOOLMAN, JOHN. (Many editions are available, among them the following.)

THE JOURNAL OF JOHN WOOLMAN. Introduction by JOHN G. WHITTIER. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1871.

THE JOURNAL OF JOHN WOOLMAN. Introduction by VIDA SCUDDER. Everyman Edition. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company.

## III. Secondary Sources:

DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN BIOGRAPHY: Edwards, Hawthorne, Johnson, Woolman.

ALLEN, A. V. G., JONATHAN EDWARDS. Boston: 1889.

FAUST, C. H., and T. H. JOHNSON, JONATHAN EDWARDS. New York: American Book Company, 1935.

FOSTER, F. H., A GENETIC HISTORY OF THE NEW ENGLAND THEOLOGY. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1907.

HAROUTUNIAN, J., PIETY VERSUS MORALISM: THE PASSING OF THE NEW ENGLAND THEOLOGY. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1932.

MCGIFFERT, A. C., JONATHAN EDWARDS. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1932.

MILLER, PERRY, THE NEW ENGLAND MIND. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1939.

RAND, B., BERKELEY'S AMERICAN SOJOURN. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1932.

SCHNEIDER, H. W., THE PURITAN MIND. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1930. Chapters III, IV, and V.

TOWNSEND, H. G., "AN ALOGICAL ELEMENT IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF EDWARDS AND ITS FUNCTION IN HIS METAPHYSICS," in GILBERT RYLE (editor), PROCEEDINGS OF THE SEVENTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF PHILOSOPHY. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1931.

TOWNSEND, H. G., PHILOSOPHICAL IDEAS IN THE UNITED STATES. New York: American Book Company, 1934. Chapters III and IV.

WINSLOW, O. E., JONATHAN EDWARDS. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1940.





# Jonathan Edwards

(1703-1758)

JONATHAN EDWARDS was born in East Windsor, Connecticut, in 1703. He attended Yale College from which he received degrees in 1720 and 1723. He had a position as tutor in 1724. At the age of twenty-three he settled at Northampton, Massachusetts, as assistant to his grandfather, the Reverend Solomon Stoddard, who was minister of the Congregational Church. Edwards became the regular minister in 1729. He was a powerful preacher. During his ministry began the "Great Awakening" which initiated the great popular revival movements so prominent in American protestantism. In 1750 Edwards's uncompromising attitude toward the Northampton Congregational Church ripened into a complete rupture and Edwards was dismissed. He then settled at Stockbridge, Massachusetts, as minister of the church and as missionary to the Indians. Here he wrote several of his greatest works. In 1757 he was called to the presidency of the College of New Jersey, now Princeton. He died in 1758 of an inoculation for small-pox.

## NOTES ON THE MIND<sup>1</sup>

(12.) BEING. It seems strange sometimes to me, that there should be Being from all Eternity; and I am ready to say, What need was there that any thing should be? I should then ask myself, Whether it seems strange that there should be either Something, or Nothing? If so, it is not strange that there should BE; for that necessity of there being Something, or Nothing, implies it.

(26.) CAUSE is that, after or upon the existence of which, or the existence of it after such a manner, the existence of another thing follows.

(27.) EXISTENCE. If we had only the sense of Seeing, we should not be as ready to conclude the visible world to have been an existence independent of perception, as we do; because the ideas we have by the sense of Feeling, are as much mere ideas, as those we have by the sense of Seeing. But we know, that the things that are objects of this sense, all that the mind views by Seeing, are merely mental Existences; because all these things, with all their modes, do exist in a looking-glass, where all will acknowledge, they exist only mentally.

<sup>1</sup> S. E. Dwight (ed.), *The Works of President Edwards*, 10 vols., 1830. This and the following selections are taken from this edition. The "Notes on the Mind," are in the Appendix of vol. 1.

(36.) Things, as to God, exist from all Eternity, alike; that is, the idea is always the same, and after the same mode. The existence of things, therefore, that are not actually in created minds, consists only in Power, or in the Determination of God, that such and such ideas shall be raised in created minds, upon such conditions.

(40.) Since all material existence is only idea, this question may be asked, In what sense may those things be said to exist, which are supposed, and ye[t] are in no actual idea of any Created minds? I answer, they exist only in Uncreated idea. But how do they exist, otherwise than they did from all Eternity, for they always were in Uncreated idea and Divine appointment. I answer, They did exist from all Eternity in Uncreated idea, as did every thing else, and as they do at present, but not in Created idea. But it may be asked, How do those things exist, which have an actual existence, but of which no created mind is conscious? — For instance, the Furniture of this room, when we are absent, and the room is shut up, and no created mind perceives it; How do these things exist? — I answer, There has been in times past such a course and succession of existences, that these things must be supposed to make the series complete, according to Divine appointment, of the order of things. And there will be innumerable things consequential, which will be out of joint, out of their constituted series, without the supposition of these. For, upon supposition of these things, are infinite numbers of things otherwise than they would be, if these were not by God thus supposed. Yea, the whole Universe would be otherwise; such an influence have these things, by their attraction and otherwise. Yea, there must be an universal attraction, in the whole system of things, from the beginning of the world to the end; and, to speak more strictly and metaphysically, we must say, in the whole system and series of ideas in all Created minds; so that these things must necessarily be put in, to make complete the system of the ideal world. That is, they must be supposed, if the train of ideas be, in the order and course, settled by the Supreme mind. So that we may answer in short, That

the existence of these things is in God's supposing of them, in order to the rendering complete the series of things, (to speak more strictly, *the series of ideas*,) according to his own settled order, and that harmony of things, which he has appointed. — The supposition of God, which we speak of, is nothing else but God's acting, in the course and series of his exciting ideas, as if they, (the things supposed,) were in actual idea.

But you may object, But there are many things so infinitely small, that their influence is altogether insensible; so that, whether they are supposed or not, there will no alteration be made in the series of Ideas. Answer, But though the influence is so small, that *we* do not perceive, yet, who knows how penetrating other spirits may be, to perceive the minutest alterations. And whether the alterations be sensible, or not, at present, yet the effect of the least influence will be sensible, in time. For instance, Let there be supposed to be a Leaden Globe, of a mile in diameter, to be moving in a right line, with the swiftness of a cannon ball, in the Infinite Void, and let it pass by a very small Atom, supposed to be at rest. This Atom will somewhat retard this Leaden Globe in its motion, though at first, and perhaps for many ages, the difference is altogether insensible. But let it be never so little, in time it will become very sensible. . . . For if every other Atom is supposed to be either retarded, or accelerated, or diverted; every Atom, however small for the present, will cause great alterations, as we have shown already, of Retardation. The case is the same as to Acceleration; and so as to Diversion, or varying the direction of the motion. For let the course of the body be never so little changed, this course, in time, may carry it to a place immensely distant from what the other would have carried it to, as is evident enough. And the case is the same still, if the motion that was before was never so slow is wholly stopped; the difference, in time, will be immense; for this slow motion would have carried it to an immense distance, if it were continued.

But the Objector will say, I acknowledge it would be thus, if the bodies, in which these insensible alterations are made, were free, and

alone, in an Infinite Void, but I do not know but the case may be far otherwise when an insensible alteration is made in a body, that is among innumerable others, and subject to infinite jumbles among them. — *Answer.* The case is the same, whether the bodies be alone in a Void, or in a System of other bodies; for the influence of this insensible alteration continues as steadily forever, through all its various interchanges and collisions with other bodies, as it would if it were alone in an Infinite Void: so that in time, a particle of matter, that shall be on this side of the Universe, might have been on the other. The existence and motion of every Atom, has influence, more or less, on the motion of all other bodies in the Universe, great or small, as is most demonstrable from the Laws of Gravity and Motion. An alteration, more or less, as to motion, is made on every Fixed Star, and on all its Planets, Primary and Secondary. Let the alteration made in the Fixed Stars, be never so small, yet in time it will make an infinite alteration, from what otherwise would have been. Let the Fixed Stars be supposed, for instance, before to have been in perfect rest; let them now be all set in motion, and this motion be never so small, yet, continued forever, where will it carry those most immense bodies, with their Systems. Let a little alteration be made in the motion of the Planets, either Retardation or Acceleration, this, in time, will make a difference of many millions of Revolutions: and how great a difference will that make in the floating bodies of the Universe.

*Coroll.* By this we may answer a more difficult question, viz. If material existence be only mental, then our bodies and organs are ideas only; and then in what sense is it true, that the Mind receives ideas by the Organs of Sense; seeing that the Organs of Sense, themselves, exist no where but in the Mind? — *Answer.* Seeing our Organs, themselves, are ideas; the connection, that our ideas have with such and such a mode of our Organs, is no other than God's constitution, that some of our ideas shall be connected with others, according to such a settled Law and Order, so that some ideas shall follow from others as their cause. — But how can this be, seeing

that ideas most commonly arise from Organs, when we have no idea of the mode of our Organs, or the manner of external objects being applied to them? I answer, Our Organs, and the motions in them and to them, exist in the manner explained above.

(9.) SPACE. Space, as has been already observed, is a necessary being if it may be called a being; and yet we have also shown, that all existence is mental, that the existence of all exterior things is ideal. Therefore it is a necessary being, only as it is a necessary idea, so far as it is a simple idea, that is necessarily connected with other simple exterior ideas, and is, as it were, their common substance or subject. It is in the same manner a necessary being, as any thing external is a being.

*Coroll.* It is hence easy to see in what sense that is true, that has been held by some, That, when there is nothing between any two bodies, they unavoidably must touch.

(13.) The real and necessary existence of Space, and its Infinity, even beyond the Universe, depend upon a like reasoning as the Extension of Spirits, and to the supposition of the reality of the existence of a Successive Duration, before the Universe: even the impossibility of removing the idea out of the mind. If it be asked, If there be Limits of the Creation, whether or no it be not possible that an Intelligent Being shall be removed beyond the limits; and then whether or no there would not be distance between that Intelligent being and the limits of the Universe, in the same manner, and as properly as there is between Intelligent beings and the parts of the Universe, within its limits; I answer, I cannot tell what the Law of Nature, or the Constitution of God, would be in this case.

*Coroll.* There is, therefore, no difficulty in answering such questions as these. What cause was there why the Universe was placed in such a part of Space? and, Why was the Universe created at such a Time? for, if there be no Space beyond the Universe, it was impossible that it should be created in another place; and if there was no Time before, it was impossible it should be created at another time.

The idea we have of Space, and what we call by that name, is only *Coloured Space*, and

is entirely taken out of the mind, if Colour be taken away. And so all that we call Extension, Motion and Figure, is gone, if Colour is gone. As to any idea of Space, Extension, Distance, or Motion, that a man born blind might form, it would be nothing like what we call by those names. All that he could have would be only certain sensations or feelings, that in themselves would be no more like what we intend by Space, Motion, etc. than the pain we have by the scratch of a pin, or than the ideas of taste and smell. And as to the idea of Motion, that such an one could have, it could be only a diversification of those successions in a certain way, by succession as to time. And then there would be an agreement of these successions of sensations, with some ideas we have by sight, as to number and proportions; but yet the ideas, after all, nothing akin to that idea we now give this name to. — And, as it is very plain, Colour is only in the mind, and nothing like it can be out of all mind. Hence it is manifest, there can be nothing like those things we call by the name of Bodies, out of the mind, unless it be in some other mind or minds.

And, indeed the secret lies here: That, which truly is the Substance of all Bodies, is *the infinitely exact, and precise, and perfectly stable Idea, in God's mind, together with his stable Will, that the same shall gradually be communicated to us, and to other minds, according to certain fixed and exact established Methods and Laws: or in somewhat different language, the infinitely exact and precise Divine Idea, together with an answerable, perfectly exact, precise and stable Will, with respect to correspondent communications to Created Minds, and effects on their minds.*

(3.) PERCEPTION of separate minds. Our perceptions, or ideas that we passively receive by our bodies, are communicated to us immediately by God, while our minds are united with our bodies; but only we in some measure know *the rule*. We know that, upon such alterations in our minds, there follow such ideas in the mind. It need, therefore, be no difficulty with us, how we shall perceive things when we are Separate. They will be communicated then, also, and according to some rule, no doubt, only we know not what.

(16.) CONSCIOUSNESS is the mind's perceiv-

ing what is in itself, — ideas, actions, passions, and every thing that is there perceptible. It is a sort of feeling within itself. The mind feels when it thinks; so it feels when it discerns, feels when it loves, and feels when it hates.

(69.) MEMORY is the identity, in some degree, of Ideas that we formerly had in our minds, with a consciousness that we formerly had them, and a supposition that their former being in the mind is the cause of their being in us at present. There is not only the presence of the same ideas, that were in our minds formerly, but also, an act of the judgment, that they were there formerly, and that judgment, not properly from proof, but from natural necessity, arising from a Law of nature which God hath fixed.

(11.) PERSONAL IDENTITY. Well might Mr. Locke say, that, Identity of *person* consisted in identity of consciousness; for he might have said that identity of *spirit*, too, consisted in the same consciousness; for a mind or spirit is nothing else but consciousness, and what is included in it. The same consciousness is, to all intents and purposes, individually, the very same spirit, or substance; as much as the same particle of matter can be the same with itself, at different times.

(67.) LOVE is not properly said to be an idea, any more than Understanding is said to be an idea. Understanding and Loving are different acts of the mind entirely; and so Pleasure and Pain are not properly ideas.

Though Pleasure and Pain may imply perception in their nature, yet it does not follow, that they are properly ideas. There is an Act of the mind in it. An idea is only a perception, wherein the mind is passive or rather subjective. The Acts of the mind are not merely ideas. All Acts of the mind, about its ideas, are not themselves mere ideas.

Pleasure and Pain have their seat in the Will, and not in the Understanding. The Will, Choice, etc. is nothing else, but the mind's being pleased with an idea, or having a superior pleasedness in something thought of, or a desire of a future thing, or a pleasedness in the thought of our union with the thing, or a pleasedness in such a state of ourselves, and a degree of pain while we are not

in that state, or a disagreeable conception of the contrary state at that time when we desire it.

(15.) TRUTH. After all that has been said and done, the only adequate definition of Truth is, The agreement of our ideas with existence. To explain what this existence is, is another thing. In abstract ideas, it is nothing but the ideas themselves; so their truth is their consistency with themselves. In things that are supposed to be without us, it is the determination and fixed mode of God's exciting ideas in us. So that Truth, in these things, is an agreement of our ideas with that series in God. It is existence; and that is all that we can say. It is impossible that we should explain a perfectly abstract and mere idea of existence; only we always find this, by running of it up, that God and Real Existence are the same.

*Coroll.* Hence we learn how properly it may be said, that God is, and that there is none else; and how proper are these names of the Deity, JEHOVAH, and I AM THAT I AM.

(6.) TRUTH is *The perception of the relations there are between ideas.* Falsehood is *The supposition of relations between ideas that are inconsistent with those ideas themselves; not their disagreement with things without.* All truth is in the mind, and only there. It is ideas, or what is in the mind, alone, that can be the object of the mind; and what we call Truth, is a consistent supposition of relations, between what is the object of the mind. Falsehood is an inconsistent supposition of relations. The Truth, that is in a mind, must be in that mind as to its object, and every thing pertaining to it. The only foundation of Error is inadequateness and imperfection of ideas; for, if the idea were perfect, it would be impossible but that all its relations should be perfectly perceived.

(10.) TRUTH, in the general, may be defined, after the most strict and metaphysical manner, *The consistency and agreement of our ideas, with the ideas of God.* I confess this, in ordinary conversation, would not half so much tend to enlighten one in the meaning of the word, as to say, *The agreement of our ideas with the things as they are.* But it should be enquired, What is it for our ideas to agree

with things as they are? seeing that corporeal things exist no otherwise than mentally; and as for most other things, they are only abstract ideas. Truth, as to external things, is the consistency of our ideas with those ideas, or that train and series of ideas, that are raised in our minds, according to God's stated order and law.

Truth, as to abstract ideas, is the consistency of our ideas with them selves. As when our idea of a circle, or a triangle, or any of their parts, is agreeable to the idea we have stated and agreed to call by the name of a circle, or a triangle. And it may still be said, that Truth is, *the consistency of our ideas with themselves.* Those ideas are false, that are not consistent with the series of ideas, that are raised in our minds, by according to the order of nature.

(21.) THE WILL. It is not that, which appears the greatest good, or the greatest apparent good, that determines the Will. It is not the greatest good apprehended, or that which is apprehended to be the greatest good; but the Greatest Apprehension of good. It is not merely by judging that any thing is a great good, that good is apprehended, or appears. There are other ways of apprehending good. The having a clear and sensible idea of any good, is one way of good's appearing, as well as judging that there is good. Therefore, all those things are to be considered — the degree of the judgment, by which a thing is judged to be good, and the contrary evil; the degree of goodness under which it appears, and the evil of the contrary; and the clearness of the idea and strength of the conception of the goodness and of the evil. And that Good, of which there is the greatest apprehension or sense, all those things being taken together, is chosen by the Will. And if there be a greater apprehension of good to be obtained, or evil escaped, by doing a thing, than in letting it alone, the Will determines to the doing it. The mind will be for the present most uneasy in neglecting it, and the mind always avoids that, in which it would be for the present most uneasy. The degree of apprehension of good, which I suppose to determine the Will, is composed of the degree of good apprehended, and the degree of appre-

hension. The degree of apprehension, again, is composed of the strength of the conception, and the judgment.

(60.) WILL, ITS DETERMINATION. The greatest mental existence of Good, the greatest degree of the mind's sense of Good, the greatest degree of apprehension, or perception, or idea of own Good, always determines the Will. Where three things are to be considered, that make up the proportion of mental existence of own good; for it is the proportion compounded of these three proportions that always determines the Will. 1. The degree of good apprehended, or the degree of good represented by idea. This used to be reckoned by many, the only thing that determined the will. — 2. The proportion or degree of apprehension or perception — the degree of the view the mind has of it, or the degree of the ideal perceptive presence of the good in the mind. This consists in two things. (1) In the degree of the judgment. This is different from the first thing we mentioned, which was the judgment of the degree of good; but we speak now of the degree of that judgment, according to the degree of assurance or certainty. (2.) The deepness of the sense of the goodness; or the clearness, liveliness and sensibleness, of the goodness or sweetness, or the strength of the impression on the mind. As one, that has just tasted honey, has more of an idea of its goodness, than one that never tasted, though he also fully believes that it is very sweet, yea as sweet as it is. And he that has seen a great beauty, has a far more clear and strong idea of it, than he that never saw it. Good, as it is thus most clearly and strongly present to the mind, will proportionally more influence the mind to incline and will. — 3. There is to be considered the proportion or degree of the mind's apprehension of the *Propriety* of the good, or of its Own Concernment in it. Thus the soul has a clearer and stronger apprehension of a pleasure, that it may enjoy the next hour, than of the same pleasure that it is sure it may enjoy ten years hence, though the latter doth really as much concern it as the former. There are usually other things concur, to make men choose present, before future, good. They are generally more certain

of the good, and have a stronger sense of it. But if they were equally certain, and it were the very same good, and they were sure it would be the same, yet the soul would be the most inclined to the nearest, because they have not so lively an apprehension of themselves, and of the good, and of the whole matter. And then there is the pain and uneasiness of enduring such an appetite so long a time, that generally comes in. But yet this matter wants to be made something more clear, why the soul is more strongly inclined to near, than distant good.

It is utterly impossible but that it should be so, that the inclination and choice of the mind should always be determined by Good, as mentally or ideally existing. It would be a contradiction to suppose otherwise, for we mean nothing else by Good, but *that which agrees with the inclination and disposition of the mind*. And surely that, which agrees with it, must agree with it. And it also implies a contradiction, to suppose that that good, whose mental or ideal being is greatest, does not always determine the Will; for we mean nothing else, by Greatest Good, but that which agrees most with the inclination and disposition of the soul. It is ridiculous to say, that the soul does not incline to that most, which is most agreeable to the inclination of the soul. — I think I was not mistaken when I said that nothing else is meant by Good, here, but that that agrees with the Inclination and Disposition of the mind. If they do not mean that that strikes the mind, that that is agreeable to it, that that pleases it, and falls in with the disposition of its nature; then I would know, What is meant.

THE WILL is no otherwise different from the Inclination, than that we commonly call that the Will, that is the Mind's Inclination, with respect to its own Immediate Actions.

(64.) EXCELLENCY may be distributed into Greatness and *Beauty*. The former is the Degree of Being; the latter is Being's consent to Being.

(49.) It is reasonable to suppose that the mere perception of Being is agreeable to perceiving Being, as well as Being's consent to Being. If absolute Being were not agreeable to perceiving Being, the contradiction

of Being to Being would not be unpleasant. Hence there is in the mind an inclination to perceive the things that are, or the Desire of Truth. The exercise of this disposition of the soul, to a high degree, is the passion of admiration. When the mind beholds a very uncommon object, there is the pleasure of a new perception, with the excitation of the appetite of knowing more of it, as the causes and manner of production and the like, and the uneasiness arising from its being so hidden. These compose that emotion called *Admiration*.

(45.) EXCELLENCE. 1. When we spake of Excellence in Bodies, we were obliged to borrow the word, *Consent*, from Spiritual things; but Excellence in and among Spirits is in its prime and proper sense, Being's consent to Being. There is no other proper consent but that of *Minds*, even of their Will, which, when it is of Minds towards Minds, it is *Love*, and when of Minds towards other things, it is *Choice*. Wherefore all the Primary and Original beauty or excellence, that is among Minds, is Love; and into this may all be resolved that is found among them.

2. When we spake of External excellency, we said, that *Being's consent to Being*, must needs be agreeable to *Perceiving Being*. But now we are speaking of Spiritual things, we may change the phrase, and say, that *Mind's love to Mind* must needs be lovely to *Beholding Mind*; and Being's love to Being, in general must needs be agreeable to Being that perceives it, because itself is a participation of Being, in general.

3. As to the proportion of this Love; — to greater Spirits, more, and to less, less; — it is beautiful, as it is a manifestation of love to Spirit or Being in general. And the want of this proportion is a deformity, because it is a manifestation of a defect of such a love. It shows that it is not Being, in general, but something else, that is loved, when love is not in proportion to the Extensiveness and Excellence of Being.

4. Seeing God has so plainly revealed himself to us; and other minds are made in his image, and are emanations from him; we may judge what is the Excellence of other minds, by what is his, which we have shown is Love.

His Infinite Beauty, is His Infinite mutual Love of Himself. Now God is the Prime and Original Being, the First and Last, and the Pattern of all, and has the sum of all perfection. We may therefore, doubtless, conclude, that all that is the perfection of Spirits may be resolved into that which is God's perfection, which is Love.

5. There are several degrees of deformity or disagreeableness of dissent from Being. One is, when there is only merely a dissent from Being. This is disagreeable to Being, (for Perceiving Being only is properly Being.) Still more disagreeable is a dissent to very excellent Being, or, as we have explained, to a Being that consents in a high degree to Being, because such a Being by such a consent becomes bigger; and a dissenting from such a Being includes, also, a dissenting from what he consents with, which is other Beings, or Being in general. Another deformity, that is more odious than mere dissent from Being, is, for a Being to dissent from, or not to consent with, a Being who consents with his Being. It is a manifestation of a greater dissent from Being than ordinary; for the Being perceiving, knows that it is natural to Being, to consent with what consents with it, as we have shown. It therefore manifests an extraordinary dissent, that consent to itself will not draw its consent. The deformity, for the same reason, is greater still, if there be dissent from consenting Being. There are such contrarieties and jars in Being, as must necessarily produce jarring and horror in perceiving Being.

6. Dissent from such Beings, if that be their fixed nature, is a manifestation of Consent to Being in general; for consent to Being is dissent from that, which dissents from Being.

7. Wherefore all Virtue, which is the Excellency of minds, is resolved into *Love to Being*; and nothing is virtuous or beautiful in Spirits, any otherwise than as it is an exercise, or fruit, or manifestation, of this love; and nothing is sinful or deformed in Spirits, but as it is the defect of, or contrary to, these.

8. When we speak of Being in general, we may be understood of the Divine Being, for he is an Infinite Being: therefore all others must necessarily be considered as nothing. As to

*Bodies*, we have shown in another place, that they have no proper Being of their own. And as to *Spirits*, they are the communications of the Great Original Spirit; and doubtless, in metaphysical strictness and propriety, He is,

as there is none else. He is likewise Infinitely Excellent, and all Excellence and Beauty is derived from him, in the same manner as all Being. And all other Excellence, is, in strictness only, a shadow of his.

## GOD GLORIFIED IN MAN'S DEPENDENCE<sup>1</sup>

1 COR. I. 29-31. — That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. That according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

THOSE Christians to whom the apostle directed this epistle, dwelt in a part of the world where human wisdom was in great repute; as the apostle observes in the 22d verse of this chapter, "The Greeks seek after wisdom." Corinth was not far from Athens, that had been for many ages the most famous seat of philosophy and learning in the world. The apostle therefore observes to them how God by the gospel destroyed, and brought to nought, their wisdom. The learned Grecians and their great philosophers, by all their wisdom did not know God, they were not able to find out the truth in divine things. But, after they had done their utmost to no effect, it pleased God at length to reveal himself by the gospel, which they accounted foolishness. He "chose the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and the base things of the world, and things that are despised, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought the things that are." And the apostle informs them in the text why he thus did, *That no flesh should glory in his presence*, &c. In which words may be observed,

1. What God aims at in the disposition of things in the affair of redemption, *viz.* that man should not glory in himself, but alone in God; *That no flesh should glory in his presence*, — *that according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.*

2. How this end is attained in the work of redemption, *viz.* by that absolute and immediate dependence which men have upon God in that work, for all their good. Inasmuch as,

*First*, All the good that they have is in and through Christ: He *is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*. All the good of the fallen and redeemed creature is concerned in these four things, and cannot be better distributed than into them; but Christ is each of them to us, and we have none of them any otherwise than in him. *He is made of God unto us wisdom*: In him are all the proper good and true excellency of the understanding. Wisdom was a thing that the Greeks admired; but Christ is the true light of the world; it is through him alone that true wisdom is imparted to the mind. It is in and by Christ that we have *righteousness*: It is by being in him that we are justified, have our sins pardoned, and are received as righteous into God's favour. It is by Christ that we have *sanctification*: We have in him true excellency of heart, as well as of understanding; and he is made unto us inherent as well as imputed righteousness. It is by Christ that we have *redemption*, or the actual deliverance from all misery, and the bestowment of all happiness and glory. Thus we have all our good by Christ, who is God.

*Secondly*, Another instance wherein our

<sup>1</sup> Preached on the public lecture in Boston, July 8, 1731, and published at the desire of several ministers and others in Boston who heard it. This was the first piece published by Mr. Edwards.



dependence on God for all our good appears, is this, That it is God that has given us Christ, that we might have these benefits through him: *he of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, &c.*

*Thirdly*, It is of him that we are in Christ Jesus, and come to have an interest in him, and so do receive those blessings which he is made unto us. It is God that gives us faith whereby we close with Christ.

So that in this verse is shown our dependence on each person in the Trinity for all our good. We are dependent on Christ the Son of God, as he is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. We are dependent on the Father, who has given us Christ, and made him to be these things to us. We are dependent on the Holy Ghost, for it is *of him that we are in Christ Jesus*; it is the Spirit of God that gives faith in him, whereby we receive him, and close with him.

#### DOCTRINE

"God is glorified in the work of redemption in this, that there appears in it so absolute and universal a dependence of the redeemed on him."—Here I propose to show, 1st, That there is an absolute and universal dependence of the redeemed on God for all their good. And 2dly, That God hereby is exalted and glorified in the work of redemption.

I. There is an absolute and universal dependence of the redeemed on God. The nature and contrivance of our redemption is such, that the redeemed are in every thing directly, immediately, and entirely dependent on God: They are dependent on him for all, and are dependent on him every way.

The several ways wherein the dependence of one being may be upon another for its good, and wherein the redeemed of Jesus Christ depend on God for all their good, are these, *viz.* That they have all their good of him, and that they have all through him, and that they have all in him: That he is the *cause* and original whence all their good comes, therein it is of him, and that he is the *medium* by which it is obtained and conveyed, therein they have it *through* him; and that he is the *good itself* given and con-

veyed, therein it is *in* him. Now those that are redeemed by Jesus Christ do, in all these respects, very directly and entirely depend on God for their all.

*First*, The redeemed have all their good of God. God is the great *author* of it. He is the *first* cause of it, and not only so, but he is the *only* proper cause. It is of God that we have our Redeemer. It is God that has provided a Saviour for us. Jesus Christ is not only of God in his person, as he is the only begotten Son of God, but he is from God, as we are concerned in him, and in his office of Mediator. He is the gift of God to us: God chose and anointed him, appointed him his work, and sent him into the world. And as it is God that *gives*, so it is God that *accepts* the Saviour. He gives the purchaser, and he affords the thing purchased.

It is of God that Christ becomes ours, that we are brought to him and are united to him. It is of God that we receive faith to close with him, that we may have an interest in him. Eph. ii. 8. "For by grace ye are saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." It is of God that we actually receive all the benefits that Christ has purchased. It is God that pardons and justifies, and delivers from going down to hell, and into his favour the redeemed are received, when they are justified. So it is God that delivers from the dominion of sin, cleanses us from our filthiness, and changes us from our deformity. It is of God that the redeemed receive all their true excellency, wisdom, and holiness: and that two ways, *viz.* as the Holy Ghost by whom these things are immediately wrought is from God, proceeds from him, and is sent by him; and also as the Holy Ghost himself is God, by whose operation and indwelling the knowledge of God and divine things, a holy disposition and all grace, are conferred and upheld. And though means are made use of in conferring grace on men's souls, yet it is of God that we have these means of grace, and it is he that makes them effectual. It is of God that we have the holy scriptures: they are his word. It is of God that we have ordinances, and their efficacy depends on the

immediate influence of his Spirit. The ministers of the gospel are sent of God, and all their sufficiency is of him. — 2 Cor. iv. 7. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." Their success depends entirely and absolutely on the immediate blessing and influence of God.

1. The redeemed have all from the *grace* of God. It was of mere grace that God gave us his only begotten Son. The grace is great in proportion to the excellency of what is given. The gift was infinitely precious, because it was of a person infinitely worthy, a person of infinite glory; and also because it was of a person infinitely near and dear to God. The grace is great in proportion to the benefit we have given us in him. The benefit is doubly infinite, in that in him we have deliverance from an infinite, because an eternal misery, and do also receive eternal joy and glory. The grace in bestowing this gift is great in proportion to our unworthiness to whom it is given; instead of deserving such a gift, we merited infinitely ill of God's hands. The grace is great according to the manner of giving, or in proportion to the humiliation and expense of the method and means by which a way is made for our having the gift. He gave him to dwell amongst us; he gave him to us incarnate, or in our nature; and in the like though sinless infirmities. He gave him to us in a low and afflicted state; and not only so, but as slain, that he might be a feast for our souls.

The grace of God in bestowing this gift is most free. It was what God was under no obligation to bestow. He might have rejected fallen man, as he did the fallen angels. It was what we never did any thing to merit; it was given while we were yet enemies, and before we had so much as repented. It was from the love of God who saw no excellency in us to attract it; and it was without expectation of ever being requited for it. — And it is from mere grace that the benefits of Christ are applied to such and such particular persons. Those that are called and sanctified are to attribute it alone to the good pleasure of God's goodness by which they are distinguished. He

is sovereign, and hath mercy on whom he will have mercy.

Man hath now a greater dependence on the grace of God than he had before the fall. He depends on free goodness of God for much more than he did then. Then he depended on God's goodness for conferring the reward of perfect obedience; for God was not obliged to promise and bestow that reward. But now we are dependent on the grace of God for much more; we stand in need of grace, not only to bestow glory upon us, but to deliver us from hell and eternal wrath. Under the first covenant we depended on God's goodness to give us the reward of righteousness, and so we do now: But we stand in need of God's free and sovereign grace to give us that righteousness; to pardon our sin, and release us from the guilt and infinite demerit of it.

And as we are dependent on the goodness of God for more now than under the first covenant, so we are dependent on a much greater, more free and wonderful goodness. We are now more dependent on God's arbitrary and sovereign good pleasure. We were in our first estate dependent on God for holiness. We had our original righteousness from him; but then holiness was not bestowed in such a way of sovereign good pleasure as it is now. Man was created holy, for it became God to create holy all his reasonable creatures. It would have been a disparagement to the holiness of God's nature, if he had made an intelligent creature unholy. But now when fallen man is made holy, it is from mere and arbitrary grace: God may for ever deny holiness to the fallen creature if he pleases, without any disparagement to any of his perfections.

And we are not only indeed more dependent on the grace of God, but our dependence is much more conspicuous, because our own insufficiency and helplessness in ourselves is much more apparent in our fallen and undone state, than it was before we were either sinful or miserable. We are more apparently dependent on God for holiness, because we are first sinful, and utterly polluted, and afterward holy. So the production of the effect is sensible, and its derivation from

God more obvious. If man was ever holy and always was so, it would not be so apparent, that he had not holiness necessarily, as an inseparable qualification of human nature. So we are more apparently dependent on free grace for the favour of God, for we are first justly the objects of his displeasure and afterward are received into favour. We are more apparently dependent on God for happiness, being first miserable, and afterward happy. It is more apparently free and without merit in us, because we are actually without any kind of excellency to merit, if there could be any such thing as merit in creature-excellency. And we are not only without any true excellency, but are full of, and wholly defiled with, that which is infinitely odious. All our good is more apparently from God, because we are first naked and wholly without any good, and afterward enriched with all good.

2. We receive all from the *power* of God. Man's redemption is often spoken of as a work of wonderful power as well as grace. The great power of God appears in bringing a sinner from his low state from the depths of sin and misery, to such an exalted state of holiness and happiness. Eph. i. 19. "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power."

We are dependent on God's power through every step of our redemption. We are dependent on the power of God to convert us, and give faith in Jesus Christ, and the new nature. It is a work of creation: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," 2 Cor. v. 17. "We are created in Christ Jesus," Eph. ii. 10. The fallen creature cannot attain to true holiness, but by being created again, Eph. iv. 24. "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." It is a raising from the dead, Colos. ii. 12, 13. "Wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." Yea, it is a more glorious work of power than mere creation, or raising a dead body to life, in that the effect attained is greater and more excellent. That holy and happy being, and

spiritual life which is produced in the work of conversion, is a far greater and more glorious effect, than mere being and life. And the state from whence the change is made — a death in sin, a total corruption of nature, and depth of misery — is far more remote from the state attained, than mere death or non-entity.

It is by God's power also that we are preserved in a state of grace. 1 Pet. i. 5. "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." As grace is at first from God, so it is continually from him, and is maintained by him, as much as light in the atmosphere is all day long from the sun, as well as at first dawning, or at sun-rising. — Men are dependent on the power of God for every exercise of grace, and for carrying on that work in the heart, for subduing sin and corruption, increasing holy principles, and enabling to bring forth fruit in good works. Man is dependent on divine power in bringing grace to its perfection, in making the soul completely amiable in Christ's glorious likeness, and filling of it with a satisfying joy and blessedness; and for the raising of the body to life, and to such a perfect state, that it shall be suitable for a habitation and organ for a soul so perfected and blessed. These are the most glorious effects of the power of God, that are seen in the series of God's acts with respect to the creatures.

Man was dependent on the power of God in his first estate, but he is more dependent on his power now; he needs God's power to do more things for him, and depends on a more wonderful exercise of his power. It was an effect of the power of God to make man holy at the first; but more remarkably so now, because there is a great deal of opposition and difficulty in the way. It is a more glorious effect of power to make that holy that was so depraved, and under the dominion of sin, than to confer holiness on that which before had nothing of the contrary. It is a more glorious work of power to rescue a soul out of the hands of the devil, and from the powers of darkness, and to bring it into a state of salvation, than to confer holiness where there was no pre-

possession or opposition. Luke xi. 21, 22. "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace; but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils." So it is a more glorious work of power to uphold a soul in a state of grace and holiness, and to carry it on till it is brought to glory, when there is so much sin remaining in the heart resisting, and Satan with all his might opposing, than it would have been to have kept man from falling at first, when Satan had nothing in man. — Thus we have shown how the redeemed are dependent on God for all their good, as they have all of him.

*Secondly*, They are also dependent on God for all, as they have all *through* him. God is the medium of it, as well as the author and fountain of it. All we have, wisdom, the pardon of sin, deliverance from hell, acceptance into God's favour, grace and holiness, true comfort, and happiness, eternal life and glory, is from God by a Mediator; and this Mediator is God; which Mediator we have an absolute dependence upon, as he through whom we receive all. So that here is another way wherein we have our dependence on God for all good. God not only gives us the Mediator, and accepts his mediation, and of his power and grace bestows the things purchased by the Mediator; but he the Mediator is God.

Our blessings are what we have by purchase; and the purchase is made of God, the blessings are purchased of him, and God gives the purchaser; and not only so, but God is the purchaser. Yea, God is both the purchaser and the price; for Christ who is God, purchased these blessings for us, by offering up himself as the price of our salvation. He purchased eternal life by the sacrifice of himself. Heb. vii. 27. "He offered up himself." ... Indeed it was the human nature that was offered; but it was the same person with the divine, and therefore was an infinite price.

As we thus have our good through God, we have a dependence on him in a respect that man in his first estate had not. Man

was to have eternal life then through his own righteousness; so that he had partly a dependence upon what was in himself; for we have a dependence upon that through which we have our good, as well as that from which we have it: and though man's righteousness that he then depended on was indeed from God, yet it was his own, it was inherent in himself; so that his dependence was not so *immediately* on God. But now the righteousness that we are dependent on is not in ourselves, but in God. We are saved through the righteousness of Christ: he *is made unto us righteousness*; and therefore is prophesied of, Jer. xxiii. 6, under that name, "the Lord our righteousness." In that the righteousness we are justified by is the righteousness of Christ, it is the righteousness of God. 2 Cor. v. 21. "That we might be made the righteousness of God in him." — Thus in redemption we have not only all things of God, but by and through him, 1 Cor. viii. 6. "But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him."

*Thirdly*, The redeemed have all their good *in God*. We not only have it of him, and through him, but it consists in him; he is all our good. — The good of the redeemed is either objective or inherent. By their objective good, I mean that extrinsic object, in the possession and enjoyment of which they are happy. Their inherent good is that excellency or pleasure which is in the soul itself. With respect to both of which the redeemed have all their good in God, or, which is the same thing, God himself is all their good.

1. The redeemed have all their *objective* good in God. God himself is the great good which they are brought to the possession and enjoyment of by redemption. He is the highest good, and the sum of all that good which Christ purchased. God is the inheritance of the saints; he is the portion of their souls. God is their wealth and treasure, their food, their life, their dwelling-place, their ornament and diadem, and their everlasting honour and glory. They have none in heaven but God; he is the great good which the re-

deemed are received to at death, and which they are to rise to at the end of the world. The Lord God is the light of the heavenly Jerusalem; and is the "river of the water of life" that runs, and "the tree of life that grows, in the midst of the paradise of God." The glorious excellencies and beauty of God will be what will forever entertain the minds of the saints, and the love of God will be their everlasting feast. The redeemed will indeed enjoy other things; they will enjoy the angels, and will enjoy one another: but that which they shall enjoy in the angels, or each other, or in any thing else whatsoever, that will yield them delight and happiness, will be what shall be seen of God in them.

2. The redeemed have all their *inherent* good in God. Inherent good is two-fold; it is either excellency or pleasure. These the redeemed not only derive from God, as caused by him, but have them in him. They have spiritual excellency and joy by a kind of participation of God. They are made excellent by a communication of God's excellency. God puts his own beauty, i.e. his beautiful likeness, upon their souls. They are made partakers of the divine nature, or moral image of God, 2 Pet. i. 4. They are holy by being made partakers of God's holiness, Heb. xii. 10. The saints are beautiful and blessed by a communication of God's holiness and joy, as the moon and planets are bright by the sun's light. The saint hath spiritual joy and pleasure by a kind of effusion of God on the soul. In these things the redeemed have communion with God; that is, they partake with him and of him.

The saints have both their spiritual excellency and blessedness by the gift of the Holy Ghost, and his dwelling in them. They are not only caused by the Holy Ghost, but are in him as their principle. The Holy Spirit becoming an inhabitant, is a vital principle in the soul. He, acting in, upon, and with the soul, becomes a fountain of true holiness and joy, as a spring is of water, by the exertion and diffusion of itself. John iv. 14. "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

Compared with chap. vii. 38, 39. "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water; but this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive." The sum of what Christ has purchased for us, is that spring of water spoken of in the former of those places, and those rivers of living water spoken of in the latter. And the sum of the blessings, which the redeemed shall receive in heaven, is that river of water of life that proceeds from the throne of God and the Lamb, Rev. xxii. 1, which doubtless signifies the same with those rivers of living water, explained John vii. 38, 39, which is elsewhere called the "river of God's pleasures." Herein consists the fulness of good, which the saints receive of Christ. It is by partaking of the Holy Spirit, that they have communion with Christ in his fulness. God hath given the Spirit, not by measure unto him; and they do receive of his fulness, and grace for grace. This is the sum of the saints' inheritance; and therefore that little of the Holy Ghost which believers have in this world, is said to be the earnest of their inheritance, 2 Cor. i. 22. "Who hath also sealed us, and given us the Spirit in our hearts." And chap. v. 5. "Now he that hath wrought us for the self same thing, is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit." And Eph. i. 13, 14. "Ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possessions."

The Holy Spirit and good things are spoken of in scripture as the same; as if the Spirit of God communicated to the soul, comprised all good things. Matt. vii. 11. "How much more shall your heavenly Father give good things to them that ask him?" In Luke it is, chap. xi. 13. "How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" This is the sum of the blessings that Christ died to procure, and the subject of gospel-promises. Gal. iii. 13, 14, "He was made a curse for us, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." The Spirit of God is the great promise of the Father. Luke xxiv. 49. "Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you."

The Spirit of God therefore is called "the Spirit of promise," Eph. i. 33. This promised thing Christ received, and had given into his hand, as soon as he had finished the work of our redemption, to bestow on all that he had redeemed; Acts ii. 13. "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye both see and hear." So that all the holiness and happiness of the redeemed is in God. It is in the communications, indwelling, and acting of the Spirit of God. Holiness and happiness are in the fruit, here and hereafter, because God dwells in them, and they in God.

Thus God has given us the Redeemer, and it is by him that our good is purchased. So God is the Redeemer and the price; and he also is the good purchased. So that all that we have is of God, and through him, and in him. Rom. xi. 36. "For of him, and through him, and to him, (or in him,) are all things." The same in the Greek that is here rendered *to him*, is rendered *in him*, 1 Cor. viii. 6.

II. God is glorified in the work of redemption by this means, *viz.* By there being so great and universal a dependence of the redeemed on him.

1. Man hath so much the greater occasion and obligation to notice and acknowledge God's perfections and all-sufficiency. The greater the creature's dependence is on God's perfections, and the greater concern he has with them, so much the greater occasion he has to take notice of them. So much the greater concern any one has with and dependence upon the power and grace of God, so much the greater occasion has he to take notice of that power and grace. So much the greater and more immediate dependence there is on the divine holiness, so much the greater occasion to take notice of and acknowledge that. So much the greater and more absolute dependence we have on the divine perfections, as belonging to the several persons of the Trinity, so much the greater occasion have we to observe and own the divine glory of each of them. That which we are most concerned with, is surely most in the way of our observation and notice; and this kind of concern with any thing, *viz.* dependence, does

especially tend to command and oblige the attention and observation. Those things that we are not much dependent upon, it is easy to neglect; but we can scarce do any other than mind that which we have a great dependence on. By reason of our so great dependence on God, and his perfections and in so many respects, he and his glory are the more directly set in our view, which way soever we turn our eyes.

We have the greater occasion to take notice of God's all-sufficiency, when all our sufficiency is thus every way of him. We have the more occasion to contemplate him as an infinite good, and as the fountain of all good. Such a dependence on God demonstrates his all-sufficiency. So much as the dependence of the creature is on God, so much the greater does the creature's emptiness in himself appear; and so much the greater the creature's emptiness, so much the greater must the fulness of the being be who supplies him. Our having all of God, shows the fulness of his power and grace; our having all through him, shows the fulness of his merit and worthiness; and our having all in him, demonstrates his fulness of beauty, love, and happiness. And the redeemed, by reason of the greatness of their dependence on God, have not only so much the greater occasion, but obligation to contemplate and acknowledge the glory and fulness of God. How unreasonable and ungrateful should we be, if we did not acknowledge that sufficiency and glory which we absolutely, immediately, and universally depend upon!

2. Hereby is demonstrated how great God's glory is considered comparatively, or as compared with the creature's. By the creature being thus wholly and universally dependent on God, it appears that the creature is nothing, and that God is all. Hereby it appears that God is infinitely above us; that God's strength, and wisdom, and holiness, are infinitely greater than ours. However great and glorious the creature apprehends God to be, yet if he be not sensible of the difference between God and him, so as to see that God's glory is great, compared with his own, he will not be disposed to give God the glory due to his name. If the creature in any re

spects sets himself upon a level with God, or exalts himself to any competition with him, however he may apprehend that great honour and profound respect may belong to God from those that are at a greater distance, he will not be so sensible of its being due from him. So much the more men exalt themselves, so much the less will they surely be disposed to exalt God. It is certainly what God aims at in the disposition of things in redemption, (if we allow the scriptures to be a revelation of God's mind,) that God should appear full, and man in himself empty, that God should appear all, and man nothing. It is God's declared design that others should not "glory in his presence;" which implies that it is his design to advance his own comparative glory. So much the more man "glories in God's presence," so much the less glory is ascribed to God.

3. By its being thus ordered, that the creature should have so absolute and universal a dependence on God, provision is made that God should have our whole souls, and should be the object of our undivided respect. If we had our dependence partly on God, and partly on something else, man's respect would be divided to those different things on which he had dependence. Thus it would be if we depended on God only for a part of our good, and on ourselves, or some other being, for another part: Or, if we had our good only from God, and through another that was not God, and in something else distinct from both, our hearts would be divided between the good itself and him from whom, and him through whom we received it. But now there is no occasion for this, God being not only he from or of whom we have all good, but also through whom, and is that good itself, that we have from him and through him. So that whatsoever there is to attract our respect, the tendency is still directly towards God, all unites in him as the centre.

#### USE

1. We may here observe the marvellous wisdom of God, in the work of redemption. God hath made man's emptiness and misery, his low, lost and ruined state, into which he sunk by the fall, an occasion of the greater

advancement of his own glory, as in other ways, so particularly in this, that there is now much more universal and apparent dependence of man on God. Though God be pleased to lift man out of that dismal abyss of sin and woe into which he has fallen, and exceedingly to exalt him in excellency and honour, and to a high pitch of glory and blessedness, yet the creature hath nothing in any respect to glory of; all the glory evidently belongs to God, all is in a mere, and most absolute, and divine dependence on the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And each person of the Trinity is equally glorified in this work: There is an absolute dependence of the creature on every one for all: All is of the Father, all through the Son, and all in the Holy Ghost. Thus God appears in the work of redemption as all in all. It is fit that he who is, and there is none else, should be the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the all and the only, in this work.

2. Hence those doctrines and schemes of divinity that are in any respect opposite to such an absolute and universal dependence on God, derogate from his glory, and thwart the design of our redemption. And such are those schemes that put the creature in God's stead, in any of the mentioned respects, that exalt man into the place of either Father, Son, or Holy Ghost, in any thing pertaining to our redemption. However they may allow of a dependence of the redeemed on God, yet they deny a dependence that is so *absolute* and universal. They own an entire dependence on God for *some* things, but not for others; they own that we depend on God for the gift and acceptance of a Redeemer, but deny so absolute a dependence on him for the obtaining of an *interest* in the Redeemer. They own an absolute dependence on the Father for giving his Son, and on the Son for working out redemption, but not so entire a dependence on the Holy Ghost for conversion, and a being in Christ, and so coming to a title to his benefits. They own a dependence on God for *means* of grace, but not absolutely for the benefit and success of those means; a partial dependence on the power of God, for obtaining and exercising holiness, but not a mere dependence on the arbitrary and sovereign



grace of God. They own a dependence on the free grace of God for a reception into his favour, so far that it is without any proper merit, but not as it is without being attracted, or moved with any excellency. They own a partial dependence on Christ, as he through whom we have life, as having purchased new terms of life, but still hold that the righteousness through which we have life is inherent in ourselves, as it was under the first covenant. Now whatever scheme is inconsistent with our *entire* dependence on God for all, and of having all of him, through him, and in him, it is repugnant to the design and tenor of the gospel, and robs it of that which God accounts its lustre and glory.

3. Hence we may learn a reason why faith is that by which we come to have an interest in this redemption; for there is included in the nature of faith, a sensible acknowledgment of *absolute dependence* on God in this affair. It is very fit that it should be required of all, in order to their having the benefit of this redemption, that they should be sensible of, and acknowledge their dependence on God for it. It is by this means that God hath contrived to glorify himself in redemption; and it is fit that he should at least have this glory of those that are the subjects of this redemption, and have the benefit of it. — Faith is a sensibleness of what is real in the work of redemption; and the soul that believes doth entirely depend on God for all salvation, in its own sense and act. Faith abases men, and exalts God; it gives all the glory of redemption to him alone. It is necessary in order to saving faith, that man should be emptied of himself, be sensible that he is “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” Humility is a great ingredient of true faith: He that truly receives redemption, receives it as a little child, Mark

x. 15. “Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child, he shall not enter therein.” It is the delight of a believing soul to abase itself and exalt God alone: that is the language of it, Psalm cxv. 1. “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name give glory.”

4. Let us be exhorted to exalt God alone, and ascribe to him all the glory of redemption. Let us endeavour to obtain, and increase in, a sensibleness of our great dependence on God, to have our eye on him alone, to mortify a self-dependent, and self-righteous disposition. Man is naturally exceeding prone to exalt himself, and depend on his own power or goodness; as though from himself he must expect happiness. He is prone to have respect to enjoyments alien from God and his Spirit, as those in which happiness is to be found. — But this doctrine should teach us to exalt God *alone*; as by trust and reliance, so by praise. *Let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord.* Hath any man hope that he is converted, and sanctified, and that his mind is endowed with true excellency and spiritual beauty? that his sins are forgiven, and he received into God’s favour, and exalted to the honour and blessedness of being his child, and an heir of eternal life? let him give God all the glory; who alone makes him to differ from the worst of men in this world, or the most miserable of the damned in hell. Hath any man much comfort and strong hope of eternal life? let not his hope lift him up, but dispose him the more to abase himself, to reflect on his own exceeding unworthiness of such a favour, and to exalt God alone. Is any man eminent in holiness, and abundant in good works? let him take nothing of the glory of it to himself, but ascribe it to him whose “workmanship we are, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.”



## A DIVINE AND SUPERNATURAL LIGHT

Immediately Imparted to the Soul by the Spirit of God,  
Shown to be Both a Scriptural and Rational Doctrine

MATTHEW XVI. 17. — And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

## DOCTRINE

THAT there is such a thing as a Spiritual and Divine Light, immediately imparted to the soul by God, of a different nature from any that is obtained by natural means.

In what I say on this subject, at this time, I would,

I. Show what this divine light is.

II. How it is given immediately by God, and not obtained by natural means.

III. Show the truth of the doctrine.

And then conclude with a brief improvement.

I. I would show what this spiritual and divine light is. And in order to it, would show,

FIRST, In a few things what it is not. And here,

1. Those convictions that natural men may have of their sin and misery, is not this spiritual and divine light. Men in a natural condition may have convictions of the guilt that lies upon them, and of the anger of God, and their danger of divine vengeance. Such convictions are from light or sensibleness of truth. That some sinners have a greater conviction of their guilt and misery than others, is because some have more light, or more of an apprehension of truth than others. And this light and conviction may be from the Spirit of God; the Spirit convinces men of sin: but yet nature is much more concerned in it than in the communication of that spiritual and divine light that is spoken of in the doctrine; it is from the Spirit of God only as assisting natural principles, and not as infusing any new principles. Common grace

differs from special, in that it influences only by assisting of nature; and not by imparting grace, or bestowing any thing above nature. The light that is obtained is wholly natural, or of no superior kind to what mere nature attains to, though more of that kind be obtained than would be obtained if men were left wholly to themselves: or, in other words, common grace only assists the faculties of the soul to do that more fully which they do by nature, as natural conscience or reason will, by mere nature, make a man sensible of guilt, and will accuse and condemn him when he has done amiss. Conscience is a principle natural to men; and the work that it doth naturally, or of itself, is to give an apprehension of right and wrong, and to suggest to the mind the relation that there is between right and wrong, and a retribution. The Spirit of God, in those convictions which unregenerate men sometimes have, assists conscience to do this work in a further degree than it would do if they were left to themselves: he helps it against those things that tend to stupify it, and obstruct its exercise. But in the renewing and sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost, those things are wrought in the soul that are above nature, and of which there is nothing of the like kind in the soul by nature; and they are caused to exist in the soul habitually, and according to such a stated constitution or law that lays such a foundation for exercises in a continued course, as is called a principle of nature. Not only are remaining principles assisted to do their work more freely and fully, but those principles are restored that were utterly destroyed by the fall; and the mind thenceforward habitually exerts those

acts that the dominion of sin had made it as wholly destitute of, as a dead body is of vital acts.

The Spirit of God acts in a very different manner in the one case, from what he doth in the other. He may indeed act upon the mind of a natural man, but he acts in the mind of a saint as an indwelling vital principle. He acts upon the mind of an unregenerate person as an extrinsic, occasional agent; for in acting upon them, he doth not unite himself to them; for notwithstanding all his influences that they may be the subjects of, they are still sensual, having not the Spirit, Jude 19. But he unites himself with the mind of a saint, takes him for his temple, actuates and influences him as a new supernatural principle of life and action. There is this difference, that the Spirit of God, in acting in the soul of a godly man, exerts and communicates himself there in his own proper nature. Holiness is the proper nature of the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit operates in the minds of the godly, by uniting himself to them, and living in them, and exerting his own nature in the exercise of their faculties. The Spirit of God may act upon a creature, and yet not in acting communicate himself. The Spirit of God may act upon inanimate creatures; as, the *Spirit moved upon the face of the waters*, in the beginning of the creation; so the Spirit of God may act upon the minds of men many ways, and communicate himself no more than when he acts upon an inanimate creature. For instance, he may excite thoughts in them, may assist their natural reason and understanding, or may assist other natural principles, and this without any union with the soul, but may act, as it were, as upon an external object. But as he acts in his holy influences and spiritual operations, he acts in a way of peculiar communication of himself; so that the subject is thence denominated spiritual.

2. This spiritual and divine light does not consist in any impression made upon the imagination. It is no impression upon the mind, as though one saw any thing with the bodily eyes: it is no imagination or idea of an outward light or glory, or any beauty of form or countenance, or a visible lustre or bright-

ness of any object. The imagination may be strongly impressed with such things; but this is not spiritual light. Indeed when the mind has a lively discovery of spiritual things, and is greatly affected by the power of divine light, it may, and probably very commonly doth, much affect the imagination; so that impressions of an outward beauty or brightness may accompany those spiritual discoveries. But spiritual light is not that impression upon the imagination, but an exceeding different thing from it. Natural men may have lively impressions on their imaginations; and we cannot determine but the devil, who transforms himself into an angel of light, may cause imaginations of an outward beauty, or visible glory, and of sounds and speeches, and other such things; but these are things of a vastly inferior nature to spiritual light.

3. This spiritual light is not the suggesting of any new truths or propositions not contained in the word of God. This suggesting of new truths or doctrines to the mind, independent of any antecedent revelation of those propositions, either in word or writing, is inspiration; such as the prophets and apostles had, and such as some enthusiasts pretend to. But this spiritual light that I am speaking of, is quite a different thing from inspiration: it reveals no new doctrine, it suggests no new proposition to the mind, it teaches no new thing of God, or Christ, or another world, not taught in the Bible, but only gives a due apprehension of those things that are taught in the word of God.

4. It is not every affecting view that men have of the things of religion that is this spiritual and divine light. Men by mere principles of nature are capable of being affected with things that have a special relation to religion as well as other things. A person by mere nature, for instance, may be liable to be affected with the story of Jesus Christ, and the sufferings he underwent, as well as by any other tragical story: he may be the more affected with it from the interest he conceives mankind to have in it: yea, he may be affected with it without believing it; as well as a man may be affected with what he reads in a romance, or sees acted in a stage play. He may be affected with a lively and eloquent de-

scription of many pleasant things that attend the state of the blessed in heaven, as well as his imagination be entertained by a romantic description of the pleasantness of fairy land, or the like. And that common belief of the truth of the things of religion, that persons may have from education or otherwise, may help forward their affection. We read in Scripture of many that were greatly affected with things of a religious nature, who yet are there represented as wholly graceless, and many of them very ill men. A person therefore may have affecting views of the things of religion, and yet be very destitute of spiritual light. Flesh and blood may be the author of this: one man may give another an affecting view of divine things with but common assistance: but God alone can give a spiritual discovery of them.

But I proceed to show,

SECONDLY, Positively what this spiritual and divine light is.

And it may be thus described: a true sense of the divine excellency of the things revealed in the word of God, and a conviction of the truth and reality of them thence arising.

This spiritual light primarily consists in the former of these, viz., a real sense and apprehension of the divine excellency of things revealed in the word of God. A spiritual and saving conviction of the truth and reality of these things, arises from such a sight of their divine excellency and glory; so that this conviction of their truth is an effect and natural consequence of this sight of their divine glory. There is therefore in this spiritual light,

1. A true sense of the divine and superlative excellency of the things of religion; a real sense of the excellency of God and Jesus Christ, and of the work of redemption, and the ways and works of God revealed in the gospel. There is a divine and superlative glory in these things; an excellency that is of a vastly higher kind, and more sublime nature than in other things; a glory greatly distinguishing them from all that is earthly and temporal. He that is spiritually enlightened truly apprehends and sees it, or has a sense of it. He does not merely rationally believe that God is glorious, but he has a sense of the gloriousness of God in his heart. There is not only a rational belief that God is

holy, and that holiness is a good thing, but there is a sense of the loveliness of God's holiness. There is not only a speculatively judging that God is gracious, but a sense how amiable God is upon that account, or a sense of the beauty of this divine attribute.

There is a twofold understanding or knowledge of good that God has made the mind of man capable of. The first, that which is merely speculative and notional; as when a person only speculatively judges that any thing is, which, by the agreement of mankind, is called good or excellent, viz., that which is most to general advantage, and between which and a reward there is a suitableness, and the like. And the other is, that which consists in the sense of the heart: as when there is a sense of the beauty, amiableness, or sweetness of a thing; so that the heart is sensible of pleasure and delight in the presence of the idea of it. In the former is exercised merely the speculative faculty, or the understanding, strictly so called, or as spoken of in distinction from the will or disposition of the soul. In the latter, the will, or inclination, or heart, is mainly concerned.

Thus there is a difference between having an opinion, that God is holy and gracious, and having a sense of the loveliness and beauty of that holiness and grace. There is a difference between having a rational judgment that honey is sweet, and having a sense of its sweetness. A man may have the former, that knows not how honey tastes; but a man cannot have the latter unless he has an idea of the taste of honey in his mind. So there is a difference between believing that a person is beautiful, and having a sense of his beauty. The former may be obtained by hearsay, but the latter only by seeing the countenance. There is a wide difference between mere speculative rational judging any thing to be excellent, and having a sense of its sweetness and beauty. The former rests only in the head, speculation only is concerned in it; but the heart is concerned in the latter. When the heart is sensible of the beauty and amiableness of a thing, it necessarily feels pleasure in the apprehension. It is implied in a person's being heartily sensible of the loveliness of a thing, that the idea of it is sweet

and pleasant to his soul; which is a far different thing from having a rational opinion that it is excellent.

2. There arises from this sense of divine excellency of things contained in the word of God, a conviction of the truth and reality of them; and that either directly or indirectly.

First, Indirectly, and that two ways.

1. As the prejudices that are in the heart, against the truth of divine things, are hereby removed; so that the mind becomes susceptible of the due force of rational arguments for their truth. The mind of man is naturally full of prejudices against the truth of divine things: it is full of enmity against the doctrines of the gospel; which is a disadvantage to those arguments that prove their truth, and causes them to lose their force upon the mind. But when a person has discovered to him the divine excellency of Christian doctrines, this destroys the enmity, removes those prejudices, and sanctifies the reason, and causes it to lie open to the force of arguments for their truth.

Hence was the different effect that Christ's miracles had to convince the disciples from what they had to convince the Scribes and Pharisees. Not that they had a stronger reason, or had their reason more improved; but their reason was sanctified, and those blinding prejudices, that the Scribes and Pharisees were under, were removed by the sense they had of the excellency of Christ and his doctrine.

2. It not only removes the hinderances of reason, but positively helps reason. It makes even the speculative notions the more lively. It engages the attention of the mind, with the more fixedness and intenseness to that kind of objects; which causes it to have a clearer view of them, and enables it more clearly to see their mutual relations, and occasions it to take more notice of them. The ideas themselves that otherwise are dim and obscure, are by this means impressed with the greater strength, and have a light cast upon them; so that the mind can better judge of them. As he that beholds the objects on the face of the earth, when the light of the sun is cast upon them, is under greater advantage to discern them in their true forms and mutual

relations, than he that sees them in a dim star-light or twilight.

The mind having a sensibleness of the excellency of divine objects, dwells upon them with delight; and the powers of the soul are more awakened and enlivened to employ themselves in the contemplation of them, and exert themselves more fully and much more to the purpose. The beauty and sweetness of the objects draws on the faculties, and draws forth their exercises: so that reason itself is under far greater advantages for its proper and free exercises, and to attain its proper end, free of darkness and delusion. But,

SECONDLY. A true sense of the divine excellency of the things of God's word doth more directly and immediately convince of the truth of them; and that because the excellency of these things is so superlative. There is a beauty in them that is so divine and god-like, that is greatly and evidently distinguishing of them from things merely human, or that men are the inventors and authors of; a glory that is so high and great, that when clearly seen, commands assent to their divinity and reality. When there is an actual and lively discovery of this beauty and excellency, it will not allow of any such thought as that it is a human work, or the fruit of men's invention. This evidence that they that are spiritually enlightened have of the truth of the things of religion, is a kind of intuitive and immediate evidence. They believe the doctrines of God's word to be divine, because they see divinity in them; i.e., they see a divine, and transcendent, and most evidently distinguishing glory in them; such a glory as, if clearly seen, does not leave room to doubt of their being of God, and not of men.

Such a conviction of the truth of religion as this, arising, these ways, from a sense of the divine excellency of them, is that true spiritual conviction that there is in saving faith. And this original of it, is that by which it is most essentially distinguished from that common assent, which unregenerate men are capable of.

II. I proceed now to the second thing proposed, viz., to show how this light is im-

mediately given by God, and not obtained by natural means. And here,

1. It is not intended that the natural faculties are not made use of in it. The natural faculties are the subject of this light; and they are the subject in such a manner, that they are not merely passive, but active in it; the acts and exercises of man's understanding are concerned and made use of in it. God, in letting in this light into the soul, deals with man according to his nature, or as a rational creature; and makes use of his human faculties. But yet this light is not the less immediately from God for that; though the faculties are made use of, it is as the subject and not as the cause; and that acting of the faculties in it, is not the cause, but is either implied in the thing itself (in the light that is imparted) or is the consequence of it. As the use that we make of our eyes in beholding various objects, when the sun arises, is not the cause of the light that discovers those objects to us.

2. It is not intended that outward means have no concern in this affair. As I have observed already, it is not in this affair, as it is in inspiration, where new truths are suggested: for here is by this light only given a due apprehension of the same truths that are revealed in the word of God; and therefore it is not given without the word. The gospel is made use of in this affair: this light is the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, 2 Cor. iv. 4. The gospel is as a glass, by which this light is conveyed to us, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. Now we see through a glass. — But,

3. When it is said that this light is given immediately by God, and not obtained by

natural means, hereby is intended, that it is given by God without making use of any means that operate by their own power, or a natural force. God makes use of means; but it is not as mediate causes to produce this effect. There are not truly any second causes of it; but it is produced by God immediately. The word of God is no proper cause of this effect: it does not operate by any natural force in it. The word of God is only made use of to convey to the mind the subject matter of this saving instruction: and this indeed it doth convey to us by natural force or influence. It conveys to our minds these and those doctrines; it is the cause of the notion of them in our heads, but not of the sense of the divine excellency of them in our hearts. Indeed a person cannot have spiritual light without the word. But that does not argue, that the word properly causes that light. The mind cannot see the excellency of any doctrine, unless that doctrine be first in the mind; but the seeing of the excellency of the doctrine may be immediately from the Spirit of God; though the conveying of the doctrine or proposition itself may be by the word. So that the notions that are the subject matter of this light, are conveyed to the mind by the word of God; but that due sense of the heart, wherein this light formally consists, is immediately by the Spirit of God. As for instance, that notion that there is a Christ, and that Christ is holy and gracious, is conveyed to the mind by the word of God: but the sense of the excellency of Christ by reason of that holiness and grace, is nevertheless immediately the work of the Holy Spirit.

## THE INSUFFICIENCY OF REASON AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR REVELATION<sup>1</sup>

1. BY REASON, I mean that power or faculty an intelligent being has to judge of the truth of propositions; either immediately, by only looking on the propositions, which is judging by intuition and self-evidence; or by putting together several propositions, which are al-

ready evident by intuition, or at least whose evidence is originally derived from intuition.

Great part of Tindal's arguing, in his *Christianity as old as the Creation*, proceeds on this ground, That since reason is the judge whether there be any revelation, or whether

<sup>1</sup> Being Chapter vii of *Miscellaneous Observations on Important Theological Subjects*, in *Works*, vol. vii.

any pretended revelation be really such; therefore reason *without* revelation, or *undirected* by revelation, must be the judge concerning each doctrine and proposition contained in that pretended revelation. This is an unreasonable way of arguing. It is as much as to say, that seeing reason is to judge of the truth of any *general* proposition, is to judge separately and independently of each particular proposition implied in, or depending and consequent upon, that general proposition. For, whether any supposed or pretended divine revelation be indeed such, is a general proposition: and the particular truths delivered in and by it, are particular propositions implied in, and consequent on, that general one. Tindal supposes each of these truths must be judged of by themselves, independently of our judging of that general truth, that the revelation that declares them is the word of God; evidently supposing, that if each of these propositions, thus judged of particularly, cannot be found to be agreeable to reason, or if reason alone will not show the truth of them; then, that general proposition on which they depend, *viz.* That the word which declares them is a divine revelation, is to be rejected: which is most unreasonable, and contrary to all the rules of common sense, and of the proceeding of all mankind, in their reasoning and judging of things in all affairs whatsoever. — For this is certain, that a proposition may be evidently true, or we may have good reason to receive it as true, though the particular propositions that depend upon it, and follow from it, may be such, that our reason, independent of it, cannot see the truth, or can see it to be true by no other means, than by first establishing that other truth on which it depends. For otherwise, there is an end of all use of our reasoning powers; an end of all arguing one proposition from another; and nothing is to be judged true, but what appears true by looking on it directly and immediately, without the help of another proposition first established, on which the evidence of it depends. — For therein consists all reasoning argumentation whatsoever; *viz.* in discovering the truth of a proposition, whose truth does not appear to our reason immediately, or when we consider it alone, but by the help

of some other proposition, on which it depends.

2. If this be not allowed, we must believe nothing at all, but self-evident propositions, and then we must have done with all such things as arguments: and all argumentation whatsoever, and all Tindal's argumentations in particular, are absurd. He himself, throughout his whole book, proceeds in that very method which this principle explodes. He argues and attempts to make evident, one proposition by another first established. — There are some general propositions, the truth of which can be known only by reason, from whence an infinite multitude of other propositions are inferred, and reasonably and justly determined to be true, and rested in as such, on the ground of the truth of that general proposition from which they are inferred by the common consent of all mankind, being led thereto by the common and universal sense of the human mind. And yet not one of those propositions can be known to be true by reason, if reason consider them by themselves independently of that general proposition.

Thus, for instance, what numberless truths are known only by consequence from that general proposition, that the testimony of our senses may be depended on? The truth of numberless particular propositions, cannot be known by reason, considered independently of the testimony of our senses, and without an implicit faith in that testimony. That general truth, that the testimony of our memories is worthy of credit, can be proved only by reason; and yet, what numberless truths are there, which we know no other way, and cannot be known to be true by reason, considering the truths in themselves, or any otherwise than by testimony of our memory, and an implicit faith in this testimony? That the agreed testimony of all we see, and converse with continually, is to be credited, is a general proposition, the truth of which can be known only by reason. And yet how infinitely numerous propositions do men receive as truth, that cannot be known to be true by reason, viewing them separately from such testimony; even all occurrences, and matters of fact, persons,

things, actions, works, events, and circumstances, that we are told of in our neighbourhood, in our own country, or in any other part of the world that we have not seen ourselves.

3. That the testimony of history and tradition is to be depended on, when attended with such and such credible circumstances, is a general proposition, whose truth can be known only by reason. And yet, how numberless are the particular truths concerning what has been before the present age, that cannot be known by reason considered in themselves, and separately from this testimony, which yet are truths on which all mankind do, ever did, and ever will rely?

That the experience of mankind is to be depended on; or, that those things which the world finds to be true by experience, are worthy to be judged true, is a general proposition, of which none doubt. By what the world finds true by experience, can be meant nothing else, than what is known to be true by one or other of those fore-mentioned kinds of testimony, viz. the testimony of history and tradition; the testimony of those we see and converse with; the testimony of our memories, and the testimony of our senses. I say, all that is known by the experience of mankind, is known only by one or more of these testimonies; excepting only the existence of that idea, or those few ideas, which are at this moment present in our minds, or are the immediate objects of present consciousness. And yet, how unreasonable would it be to say, that we must first know those things to be true by reason, before we give credit to our experience of the truth of them! Not only are there innumerable truths, that are reasonably received as following from such general propositions as have been mentioned, which cannot be known by reason, if they are considered by themselves, or otherwise than as inferred from these general propositions; but also, many truths are reasonably received, and are received by the common consent of the reason of all rational persons, as undoubted truths, whose truth not only would not otherwise be discoverable by reason, but, when they are discovered by their consequence from that general proposi-

tion, appear in themselves not easy, and reconcilable to reason, but difficult, incomprehensible, and their agreement with reason not understood. So that men, at least most men, are not able to explain, or conceive of the manner in which they are agreeable to reason.

4. Thus, for instance, it is a truth, which depends on that general proposition, that credit is to be given to the testimony of our senses, that our souls and bodies are so united, that they act on each other. But it is a truth which reason otherwise cannot discover, and, now that it is revealed by the testimony of our senses, reason cannot comprehend, that what is immaterial, and not solid nor extended, can act upon matter. Or, if any choose to say, that the soul is material, then other difficulties arise as great. For reason cannot imagine any way, that a solid mass of matter, whether at rest or in motion, should have perception, should understand, and should exert thought and volition, love, hatred, &c. And if it be said that spirit acts on matter, and matter on spirit, by an established law of the Creator, which is no other than a fixed method of his producing effects; still the manner how it is possible to be, will be inconceivable. We can have no conception of any way or manner, in which God, who is a pure Spirit, can act upon matter, and impel it.

There are several things in mechanics and hydrostatics, that by the testimony of our senses are true in fact, not only that reason never first discovered before the testimony of sense declared them, but, now they are declared, are very great paradoxes, and, if proposed, would seem contrary to reason, at least to the reason of the generality of mankind, and such as are not either mathematicians, or of more than common penetration, and what they cannot reconcile to their reason. But God has given reason to the common people, to be as much their guide and rule, as he has to mathematicians and philosophers.

5. Even the very existence of a sensible world, which we receive for certain from the testimony of our senses, is attended with difficulties and seeming inconsistencies with



reason, which are insuperable to the reason at least of most men. For, if there be a sensible world, that world exists either *in* the mind only, or *out* of the mind, independent of its imagination or perception. If the *latter*, then that sensible world is some material substance, altogether diverse from the ideas we have by any of our senses — as *colour*, or *visible* extension and figure, which is nothing but the quantity of colour and its various limitations, which are sensible qualities that we have by *sight*; and *solidity*, which is an idea we have by *feeling*; and *extension* and *figure*, which is only the quantity and limitation of these; and so of all other qualities. — But that there should be any substance entirely distinct from any, or all of these, is utterly inconceivable. For, if we exclude all colour, solidity, or conceivable extension, dimension and figure, what is there left, that we can conceive of? Is there not a removal on our minds of all existence, and a perfect emptiness of every thing?

But, if it be said, that the sensible world has no existence, but only *in the mind*, then the sensories themselves, or the organs of sense, by which sensible ideas are let into the mind; have no existence but only in the mind; and those organs of sense have no existence but what is conveyed into the mind by themselves; for they are a part of the sensible world. And then it will follow, that the organs of sense owe their existence to the organs of sense, and so are prior to themselves, being the causes or occasions of their own existence; which is a seeming inconsistency with reason, that I imagine, the reason of all men cannot explain and remove.

6. There are innumerable propositions, that we reasonably receive from the testimony of experience, all depending on the truth of that general proposition, “that experience is to be relied on,” (what is meant by experience has been already explained,) that yet are altogether above reason. They are paradoxes attended with such seeming inconsistencies, that reason cannot clearly remove, nor fully explain the mystery.

By experience we know that there is such a thing as thought, love, hatred, &c. But yet this is attended with inexplicable diffi-

culties. If there be such a thing as thought and affection, where are they? If they exist, they exist in some place, or no place. That they should exist, and exist in no place, is above our comprehension. It seems a contradiction, to say, they exist, and yet exist nowhere. And, if they exist in some place, then they are not in other places, or in all places; and therefore must be confined, at one time, to one place, and that place must have certain limits; from whence it will follow, that thought, love, &c. have some figure, either round, or square, or triangular; which seems quite disagreeable to reason, and utterly inconsonant to the nature of such things as thought and the affections of the mind.

7. It is evident, by experience, that *something now is*. But this proposition is attended with things that reason cannot comprehend, paradoxes that seem contrary to reason. For, if something now *is*, then either something was from all eternity; or, something began to be, without any cause or reason of its existence. The *last* seems wholly inconsistent with natural sense: And the *other*, viz. That something has been from all eternity, implies, that there has been a duration past, which is without any beginning, which is an infinite duration: which is perfectly inconceivable, and is attended with difficulties that seem contrary to reason. For we cannot conceive how an infinite duration can be made greater, any more than how a line of infinite length can be made longer. But yet we see that past duration is continually added to. If there were a duration passed without beginning, a thousand years ago, then that past infinite duration has now a thousand years added to it: and if so, it is greater than it was before by a thousand years; because the whole is greater than a part. Now, the past duration consists of two parts, viz. that which was before the last thousand years, and that which is since. Thus here are seeming contradictions, involved in this supposition of an infinite duration past.

And, moreover, if something has been from eternity, it is either an endless succession of causes and effects, as for instance an endless



succession of fathers and sons, or something equivalent; but the supposition is attended with manifold apparent contradictions; or, there must have been some eternal self-existent being, having the reasons of his existence within himself: or, he must have existed from eternity, without any reason of his existence; both which are inconceivable. That a thing should exist from eternity, without any reason why it should be so, rather than otherwise, is altogether inconceivable, and seems quite repugnant to reason. And why a being should be self-existent, and have the reason of his existence within himself, seems also inconceivable, and never, as I apprehend, has yet been explained. If there has been any thing from eternity, then that past eternity is either an endless duration of successive parts as successive hours, minutes, &c. or it is an eternal duration without succession. — The latter seems repugnant to reason, and incompatible with any faculty of understanding that we enjoy: and, the other, an infinite number of successive parts, involves the very same contradictions with the supposition of an eternal succession of fathers and sons.

That the world has existed *from eternity without a cause*, seems wholly inconsistent with reason. In the first place, it is inconsistent with reason, that it should exist without a cause. For it is evident, that it is not a thing, the nature and manner of which is necessary in itself; and therefore it requires a cause or reason out of itself, why it is so, and not otherwise. And in the next place, if it exists from eternity, then succession has been from eternity; which involves the fore-mentioned contradictions. But, if it be without a cause, and does not exist from eternity, then it has been created out of nothing; which is altogether inconceivable, and what reason cannot show to be possible; and many of the greatest philosophers have supposed it plainly inconsistent with reason. — Many other difficulties might be mentioned as following from that proposition, "that something now is," that are insuperable to reason.

8. It is evident, by *experience*, that *great evil*, both moral and natural, *abounds in the world*. It is manifest, that great injustice, violence,

treachery, perfidiousness, and extreme cruelty to the innocent, abound in the world; as well as innumerable extreme sufferings, issuing finally in destruction and death, are general all over the world, in all ages. — But this could not *otherwise* have been known by reason; and even now is attended with difficulties, which the reason of many, yea most of the learned men and greatest philosophers that have been in the world, have not been able to surmount. That it should be so ordered or permitted in a world, absolutely and perfectly under the care and government of an infinitely holy and good God, discovers a seeming repugnancy to reason, that few, if any, have been able fully to remove.

9. *That men are to be blamed or commended for their good or evil voluntary actions*, is a general proposition received, with good reason, by the dictates of the natural, common, and universal moral sense of mankind in all nations and ages; which moral sense is included in what Tindal means by reason and the law of nature. And yet many things attend this truth, that appear difficulties and seeming repugnancies to reason, which have proved altogether insuperable to the reason of many of the greatest and most learned men in the world.

10. I observe, further, that when any general proposition is recommended to us as true, by any testimony or evidence, that, considered by itself, seems sufficient, without contrary testimony or evidence to countervail it; and difficulties attend that proposition: if these difficulties are no greater, and of no other sort, than what might reasonably be expected to attend true propositions of that kind, then these difficulties are not only no valid or sufficient objection against that proposition, but they are no objection at all.

Thus, there are many things, that I am told concerning the effects of electricity, magnetism, &c. and many things that are recorded in the philosophical transactions of the Royal Society, which I have never seen, and are very mysterious: but, being well attested, their mysteriousness is no manner of objection against my belief of the accounts; because, from what I have observed, and do know, such a mysteriousness is no other than

is to be expected in a particular, exact observation of nature, and a critical tracing of its operations. It is to be expected, that the further it is traced, the more mysteries will appear. To apply this to the case in hand: If the difficulties which attend that which is recommended by good proof or testimony to our reception, as a divine revelation, are no greater, nor of any other nature, than such as, all things considered, might reasonably be expected to attend a revelation of such a sort, of things of such a nature, and given for such ends and purposes, and under such circumstances; these difficulties not only are not of weight sufficient to balance the testimony or proof that recommends it, but they are of no weight at all as objections against the revelation. They are not reasonably to be looked upon as of the nature of arguments against it; but on the contrary, may with good reason, be looked upon as confirmations, and of the nature of arguments in its favour.

16. It may well be expected, that a revelation of truth, concerning an infinite being, should be attended with mystery. We find, that the reasonings and conclusions of the best metaphysicians and mathematicians, concerning infinities, are attended with paradoxes and seeming inconsistencies. Thus it is concerning infinite lines, surfaces and solids, which are things external. But much more may this be expected in infinite spiritual things; such as infinite thought, infinite apprehension, infinite reason, infinite will, love, and joy, infinite spiritual power, agency, &c.

Nothing is more certain, than that there *must* be an unmade and unlimited being; and yet, the very notion of such a being is all mystery, involving nothing but incomprehensible paradoxes, and seeming inconsistencies. It involves the notion of a being, self-existent and without any cause, which is utterly inconceivable, and seems repugnant to all our ways of conception. An infinite spiritual being, or infinite understanding and will and spiritual power, must be omnipresent, without extension; which is nothing but mystery and seeming inconsistency. . . .

20. If it be still objected, that it is peculiarly unreasonable that mysteries should be supposed in a revelation given to mankind; because, if there be such a revelation, the direct and principal design of it must be, to teach mankind, and to inform their understandings, which is inconsistent with its delivering things to man which he cannot understand: and which do not inform but only puzzle and confound his understanding: I answer,

1st. Men are capable of understanding as much as is pretended to be revealed; though they cannot understand all that belongs to the things revealed. For instance, God may reveal, that there are three who have the same nature of the Deity, whom it is most proper for us to look upon as three persons; though the particular *manner* of their distinction, or how they differ, may not be revealed. He may reveal that the Godhead was united to man, so as to be properly looked upon as the same person; and yet not reveal *how* it was effected.

2d. No allowance is made in the objection, for what may be understood of the word of God in future ages, which is not now understood. And it is to be considered, that divine revelation is not given only for the present or past ages.

3d. The seeming force of this objection, lies wholly in this, that we must suppose whatever God does, tends to answer the end for which he does it; but that those parts of a revelation which *we* cannot understand, do not answer the end, inasmuch as informing our understandings is the very end of a revelation, if there be any such thing.

21. But this objection is no other, than just equivalent to an objection which may be made against many parts of the *creation*, particularly of this lower world. It is apparent, the most direct and principal end of this lower world was, to be for the habitation, use, and benefit of mankind, the head of this lower world. But there are some parts of it that seem to be of no use to man, but are rather inconvenient and prejudicial to him; as, the innumerable stones and rocks that overspread so great a part of the earth, which as to any thing known, are altogether useless,

and oftentimes are rather an inconvenience than benefit.

Thus, it is reasonable to expect, that, in such a revelation, there should be many things plain and easy to be understood, and that the revelation should be most intelligible, wherein it is most necessary for us to understand it, in order to our guidance and direction in the way to our happiness; but that there should also be many incomprehensible mysteries in it, many things understood in part, but yet that room should be left for vast improvement in the knowledge of them, to the end of the world. It is reasonable to expect, that the case should actually be the same as concerning the works of nature; that many things which were formerly great and insuperable difficulties, unintelligible mysteries, should now, by further study and improvement, be well cleared up, and cease longer to remain difficulties; and that other difficulties should be considerably diminished, though not yet fully cleared up.

It may be expected that, as in the system of nature so in the system of revelation, there should be many parts whose use is but little understood, and many that should seem wholly useless, yea, and some that should seem rather to do hurt than good. I might further observe, that if we have a revelation given in ancient languages, used among a people whose customs and phraseology are but very imperfectly understood, many difficulties will arise from hence. And, in a very concise history, in which only some particular facts and circumstances that concern the special purpose of that revelation, are mentioned — and innumerable others are omitted that would be proper to be mentioned, if the main design were to give a full, clear, connected, continued history of such a people, or such affairs as the history mentions — it is no wonder that many doubts and difficulties arise.

22. Tindal's main argument against the need of any revelation, is, that the *law of nature is absolutely perfect*. But how weak and impertinent is this arguing, that because the *law of nature* (which is no other than natural rectitude and obligation) is perfect, therefore

the *light of nature* is sufficient. To say, that the law of nature is perfect, yea, absolutely perfect, is no more than to say, that what is naturally fit and right in itself, is indeed right; and that what is in itself, or in its own nature perfectly and absolutely right, is absolutely right. But this is an empty, insipid kind of doctrine. It is an idle way of spending time, ink, and paper, to spend them in proving, that what is in its own nature perfectly true, is perfectly true; and what is in its nature perfectly good, is perfectly good; or that what is, is, and is as it is. But this is all that can be meant by the law of nature being perfect.

And how far is this from having any reference to that question, whether we have by mere nature, without instruction, all that light and advantage that we need, clearly and fully to know what is right, and all that is needful for us to be and to do, in our circumstances as sinners, &c. in order to the forgiveness of sin, the favour of God, and our own happiness? What, according to the nature of things, is fittest and best, may be most perfect; and yet our natural knowledge of this, may be most imperfect.

If Tindal, or any other deist, would assert, and urge it upon mankind as an assertion that they ought to believe, that the light of nature is so sufficient to teach all mankind what they *ought*, or in any respect *need* to be, and to believe and practise for their good, that any additional instruction is needless and useless: then, all instruction in families and schools is needless and useless; all instruction of parents, tutors, and philosophers; all that has been said to promote any such knowledge as tends to make men good and happy by word of mouth, or by writing and books; all that is written by ancient and modern philosophers and learned men; and then, also, all the pains the deists take in talking and writing to enlighten mankind, is wholly needless and vain.

23. When it is asserted that the light of nature, or the means and advantages which all mankind have by pure nature, to know the way of their duty and happiness, are absolutely sufficient, without any additional means and advantages; one of these two

things must be meant by it, if it has any meaning; either that they are sufficient in order to a mere possibility of obtaining all needful and useful knowledge in these important concerns, or that these natural means have a sufficient tendency actually to reach the effect, either universally, or generally, or at least in a prevailing degree, according as the state of mankind may be.

If the former of these be meant, *viz.* that the means of understanding these things, which all mankind have by mere nature, is sufficient, in order to a bare possibility of obtaining this knowledge; even that, should it be allowed, will not at all prove, that further light is not extremely needed by mankind. A bare *possibility* may be; and yet there may be no tendency or *probability* that ever the effect (however necessary, and however dreadful the consequence of its failing) will be reached, in one single instance, in the whole world of mankind, from the beginning of the world to the end of it, though it should stand millions of ages.

But if by the sufficiency of these natural means be meant, a *sufficiency of tendency* actually to reach the effect — either universally, or in a prevailing degree, considering all things belonging to the state and circumstances of mankind — it is the very same thing as to say, that it *actually* does obtain the effect. For, if the tendency, all things considered, be sufficient actually to obtain the effect, doubtless it does actually obtain it. For, what should hinder a cause from actually obtaining the effect that it has a sufficient tendency to obtain, all things considered? So that here, what we have to inquire, is, whether that effect be actually obtained in the world? whether the world of mankind be actually brought to all necessary or very important knowledge of these things, merely by the means they have by nature? History, observation, and experience, are the things which must determine the question.

24. In order the more clearly to judge of this matter, of the sufficiency of the light of nature to know what is necessary to be known of religion in order to man's happiness, we must consider what are the things that must

be known in order to this; which are these two: 1<sup>st</sup>. The religion of nature, or the religion proper and needful, considering the state and relations we stand in as creatures: 2<sup>d</sup>. The religion of a sinner, or the religion and duties proper and necessary for us, considering our state as depraved and guilty creatures, having incurred the displeasure of our Creator.

As to the former, it is manifest from *fact*, that nature alone is not sufficient for the discovery of the religion of nature, in the *latter* sense of sufficiency: that is, no means we have by mere nature, without instruction, bring men to the knowledge of the nature of God, and our natural relation to, and dependence on him, and the consequent relations we stand in to our fellow-creatures, and the duties becoming these relations, sufficient actually to reach the effect, either universally, or generally, or in any prevailing degree. No; nor does it appear to have proved sufficient so much as in a single instance. A sufficiency to see the reasonableness of these things, when pointed out, is not the same thing as a sufficiency to find them out. None but either mere dunces, or those who are incorrigibly wilful, will deny that there is a vast difference.

And as to the latter, *viz.* the religion of a *sinner*, or the duties proper and necessary for us as depraved, guilty, and offending creatures; it is most evident, the light of nature cannot be sufficient for our information, by any means, or in any sense whatsoever. No, nor is the law of nature sufficient either to prescribe or establish this religion. The light of nature is, in no sense whatsoever, sufficient to discover this religion. It has no sufficient tendency to it; nor, indeed, any tendency at all to discover it to any one single person in any age. And it not only has no tendency to the obtaining of this knowledge, by mere natural means, but it affords no *possibility* of it. — Not only is the *light* of nature insufficient to discover this religion, but the *law* of nature is not sufficient to establish it, or to give any room for it.

## FREEDOM OF THE WILL

## PART ONE

Wherein are Explained and Stated Various Terms and Things  
Belonging to the Subject of the Ensuing Discourse

## SECTION I

## CONCERNING THE NATURE OF THE WILL

IT MAY possibly be thought, that there is no great need of going about to define or describe the Will; this word being generally as well understood as any other words we can use to explain it; and so perhaps it would be, had not philosophers, metaphysicians and polemic divines brought the matter into obscurity by the things they have said of it. But since it is so, I think it may be of some use, and will tend to the greater clearness in the following discourse to say a few things concerning it.

And therefore I observe, that the Will (without any metaphysical refining) is plainly, that by which the mind chooses any thing. The faculty of Will is that faculty or power or principle of the mind by which it is capable of choosing: an act of the Will is the same as an act of choosing or choice.

If any think it is a more perfect definition of the Will, to say, that it is that by which the soul either chooses or refuses: I am content with it: though I think that it is enough to say, it is that by which the soul chooses: for in every act of Will whatsoever, the mind chooses one thing rather than another; it chooses something rather than the contrary, or rather than the want or non-existence of that thing. So in every act of refusal, the mind chooses the absence of the thing refused; the positive and the negative are set before the mind for its choice, and it chooses the negative; and the mind's making its choice in that case is properly the act of the Will; the Will's determining between the two is a voluntary determining; but that is the same thing as making a choice. So that whatever names we call the act of the Will by, choos-

ing, refusing, approving, disapproving, liking, disliking, embracing, rejecting, determining, directing, commanding, forbidding, inclining or being averse, a being pleased or displeased with; all may be reduced to this of choosing. For the soul to act voluntarily, is ever to act electively.

Mr. Locke says,<sup>1</sup> "the Will is perfectly distinguished from Desire; which in the very same action may have a quite contrary tendency from that which our Wills set us upon. A man (says he) whom I cannot deny, may oblige me to use persuasions to another, which, at the same time I am speaking, I may wish may not prevail on him. In this case it is plain the Will and Desire run counter." I do not suppose, that Will and Desire are words of precisely the same signification: Will seems to be a word of a more general signification, extending to things present and absent. Desire respects something absent. I may prefer my present situation and posture, suppose, sitting still, or having my eyes open, and so may will it. But yet I cannot think they are so entirely distinct, that they can ever be properly said to run counter. A man never, in any instance, wills any thing contrary to his desires, or desires any thing contrary to his Will. The forementioned instance, which Mr. Locke produces, does not prove that he ever does. He may, on some consideration or other, will to utter speeches which have a tendency to persuade another, and still may desire that they not persuade him; but yet his Will and Desire do not run counter. The thing which he wills, the very same he desires; and he does not will a thing, and desire the contrary in any particular.

<sup>1</sup> *Human Understanding*, vol. 1, pp. 203, 204. [Edwards's note.]

In this instance, it is not carefully observed, what is the thing willed, and what is the thing desired: if it were, it would be found that Will and Desire do not clash in the least. The thing willed on some consideration, is to utter such words; and certainly, the same consideration, so influences him, that he does not desire the contrary: all things considered, he chooses to utter such words, and does not desire not to utter them. . . .

But not to dwell any longer on this, whether *Desire* and *Will* and whether *Preference* and *Volition* be precisely the same things or no; yet, I trust it will be allowed by all, that in every act of Will there is an act of choice; that in every volition there is a preference, or a prevailing inclination of the soul, whereby the soul, at that instant, is out of a state of perfect indifference, with respect to the direct object of the volition. So that in every act, or going forth of the Will, there is some preponderation of the mind or inclination, one way rather than another; and the soul had rather *have* or *do* one thing than another, or than not have or do that thing; and that there, where there is absolutely no preferring or choosing, but a perfect continuing equilibrium, there is no volition.

## SECTION II

### CONCERNING THE DETERMINATION OF THE WILL

By *determining the Will*, if the phrase be used with any meaning, must be intended, causing that the act of the Will or choice should be thus, and not otherwise: and the Will is said to be determined, when, in consequence of some action or influence, its choice is directed to, and fixed upon a particular object. As when we speak of the determination of motion, we mean causing the motion of the body to be such a way, or in such a direction, rather than another.

To talk of the determination of the Will, supposes an effect, which must have a cause. If the Will be determined, there is a determiner. This must be supposed to be intended even by them that say, the Will determines itself. If it be so, the Will is both determiner and determined; it is a cause that

acts and produces effects upon itself, and is the object of its own influence and action.

With respect to that grand enquiry, What determines the Will? it would be very tedious and unnecessary at present to enumerate and examine all the various opinions which have been advanced concerning this matter; nor is it needful that I should enter into a particular disquisition of all points debated in disputes on that question, whether the Will always follows the last dictate of the understanding. It is sufficient to my present purpose to say, it is that motive, which, as it stands in the view of the mind, is the strongest, that determines the Will. But it may be necessary that I should a little explain my meaning in this.

By *motive*, I mean the whole of that which moves, excites or invites the mind to volition, whether that be one thing singly, or many things conjunctly. Many particular things may concur and unite their strength to induce the mind; and, when it is so, all together are as it were one complex motive. And when I speak of the *strongest motive*, I have respect to the strength of the whole that operates to induce to a particular act of volition, whether that be the strength of one thing alone, or of many together.

Things that exist in the view of the mind have their strength, tendency or advantage to move or excite its Will, from many things appertaining to the nature and circumstances of the thing viewed, the nature and circumstance of the mind that views, and the degree and manner of its view; of which it would perhaps be hard to make a perfect enumeration. But so much I think may be determined in general, without room for controversy, that whatever is perceived or apprehended by an intelligent and voluntary agent, which has the nature and influence of a motive to volition or choice, is considered or viewed as good; nor has it any tendency to invite or engage the election of the soul in any further degree than it appears such. For to say other wise, would be to say, that things that appear have a tendency by the appearance they make, to engage the mind to elect them, some other way than by their appearing

eligible to it; which is absurd. And therefore it must be true, in some sense, that the Will always is as the greatest apparent good is....

It appears from these things, that in some sense, the Will always follows the last dictate of the understanding. But then the understanding must be taken in a large sense, as including the whole faculty of perception and apprehension, and not merely what is called reason or judgment. If by the dictate of the understanding is meant what reason declares to be best or most for the person's happiness, taking in the whole of his duration, it is not true, that the Will always follows the last dictate of the understanding....

### SECTION III

#### CONCERNING THE MEANING OF THE TERMS NECESSITY, IMPOSSIBILITY, INABILITY, &., AND OF CONTINGENCE

Metaphysical or Philosophical Necessity is nothing different from their certainty. I speak not now of the certainty of knowledge, but the certainty that is in things themselves, which is the foundation of the certainty of the knowledge of them; or that wherein lies the ground of the infallibility of the proposition which affirms them.

What is sometimes given as the definition of philosophical Necessity, namely, that by which a thing cannot but be, or whereby it cannot be otherwise, fails of being a proper explanation of it, on two accounts: first, the words *can*, or *cannot*, need explanation as much as the word *Necessity*; and the former may as well be explained by the latter, as the latter by the former. Thus, if any one asked us what we mean, when we say, a thing cannot but be, we might explain ourselves by saying, we mean, it must necessarily be so; as well as explain Necessity, by saying, it is that by which a thing cannot but be. And secondly, this definition is liable to the fore-mentioned great inconvenience: the words *cannot*, or *unable*, are properly relative, and have relation to power exerted, or that may be exerted, in order to the thing spoken of;

to which, as I have now observed, the word *Necessity*, as used by philosophers, has no reference.

Philosophical Necessity is really nothing else than the full and fixed connection between the things signified by the subject and predicate of a proposition, which affirms something to be true. When there is such a connection, then the thing affirmed in the proposition is necessary, in a philosophical sense; whether any opposition, or contrary effort be supposed, or supposable in the case, or no. When the subject and predicate of the proposition, which affirms the existence of any thing, either substance, quality, act or circumstance, have a full and certain connection, then the existence or being of that thing is said to be necessary in a metaphysical sense. And in this sense I use the word Necessity, in the following discourse, when I endeavor to prove that Necessity is not inconsistent with liberty.

### SECTION IV

#### OF THE DISTINCTION OF NATURAL AND MORAL NECESSITY, AND INABILITY

That Necessity which has been explained, consisting in an infallible connection of the things signified by the subject and predicate of a proposition, as intelligent beings are the subjects of it, is distinguished into *moral* and *natural* Necessity....

The phrase, *moral* Necessity, is used variously; sometimes it is used for a Necessity or moral obligation. So we say, a man is under Necessity, when he is under bonds of duty and conscience, which he cannot be discharged from. So the word Necessity is often used for great obligation in point of interest. Sometimes by moral Necessity is meant that apparent connection of things, which is the ground of moral evidence; and so is distinguished from absolute Necessity, or that sure connection of things, that is a foundation for infallible certainty. In this sense, moral Necessity signifies much the same as that high degree of probability, which is ordinarily sufficient to satisfy, and be relied upon by mankind, in their conduct and behavior in the world, as they would

consult their own safety and interest, and treat others properly as members of society. And sometimes by moral Necessity is meant that Necessity of connection and consequence, which arises from such moral causes, as the strength of inclination, or motives, and the connection which there is in many cases between these, and such certain volitions and actions. And it is in this sense, that I use the phrase, *moral Necessity*, in the following discourse.

By natural Necessity, as applied to men, I mean such Necessity as men are under through the force of natural causes; as distinguished from what are called moral causes, such as habits and dispositions of the heart, and moral motives and inducements. Thus men placed in certain circumstances, are the subjects of particular sensations by Necessity; they feel pain when their bodies are wounded; they see the objects presented before them in a clear light, when their eyes are opened; so they assent to the truth of certain propositions, as soon as the terms are understood; as that two and two make four, that black is not white, that two parallel lines can never cross one another; so by a natural Necessity men's bodies move downwards, when there is nothing to support them.

But here several things may be noted concerning these two kinds of Necessity.

1. Moral Necessity may be as absolute, as natural Necessity. That is, the effect may be as perfectly connected with its moral cause, as a natural necessary effect is with its natural cause....

2. [The difference between these two kinds of Necessity] does not lie so much in the nature of the connection, as in the two terms connected. The cause with which the effect is connected, is of a particular kind, viz., that which is of moral nature; either some previous habitual disposition, or some motive exhibited to the understanding. And the effect is also of a particular kind; being likewise of a moral nature; consisting in some inclination or volition of the soul or voluntary action.

. . . . .

#### SECTION V

#### CONCERNING THE NOTION OF LIBERTY, AND OF MORAL AGENCY

The plain and obvious meaning of the words *Freedom* and *Liberty*, in common speech, is *power, opportunity or advantage, that any one has, to do as he pleases*. Or in other words, his being free from hinderance or impediment in the way of doing, or conducting in any respect, as he wills. And the contrary to Liberty, whatever name we call that by, is a person's being hindered or unable to conduct as he will, or being necessitated to do otherwise.

If this which I have mentioned be the meaning of the word Liberty, in the ordinary use of language; as I trust that none that has ever learned to talk, and is unprejudiced, will deny; then it will follow, that in propriety of speech, neither Liberty, nor its contrary, can properly be ascribed to any being or thing, but that which has such a faculty, power or property, as is called will. For that which is possessed of no such thing as will, cannot have any power or opportunity of doing according to its will, nor be necessitated to act contrary to its will, nor be restrained from acting agreeably to it. And therefore to talk of Liberty, or the contrary, as belonging to the very will itself, is not to speak good sense; if we judge of sense, and nonsense, by the original and proper signification of words. For the will itself is not an agent that has a will: the power of choosing itself, has not a power of choosing. That which has the power of volition or choice is the man or the soul, and not the power of volition itself. And he that has the Liberty of doing according to his will, is the agent or doer who is possessed of the will; and not the will which he is possessed of.... To be free is the property of an agent, who is possessed of powers and faculties, as much as to be cunning, valiant, bountiful, or zealous. But these qualities are the properties of men or persons and not the properties of properties.

There are two things that are contrary to this which is called Liberty in common speech. One is constraint; the same is otherwise called force, compulsion, and coercion;



which is a person's being necessitated to do a thing contrary to his will. The other is restraint; which is his being hindered, and not having power to do according to his will. But that which has no will, cannot be the subject of these things. I need say the less on this head, Mr. Locke having set the same thing forth, with so great clearness, in his *Essay on Human Understanding*.

But one thing I would observe concerning what is vulgarly called Liberty; namely, that power and opportunity for one to do and conduct as he will, or according to his choice, is all that is meant by it; without taking into the meaning of the word any thing of the

cause or original of that choice; or at all considering how the person came to have such a volition; whether it was caused by some external motive or internal habitual bias; whether it was determined by any internal antecedent volition, or whether it happened without a cause; whether it was necessarily connected with something foregoing, or not connected. Let the person come by his volition or choice how he will, yet, if he is able, and there is nothing in the way to hinder his pursuing and executing his will, the man is fully and perfectly free, according to the primary and common notion of freedom.

# *Samuel Johnson*

(1696–1772)

JOHNSON'S life was devoted not only to philosophy but to the ecclesiastical and educational needs of his time. He was born in Guilford, Connecticut, graduated from Yale College in 1714 and remained there as tutor a year after graduation. If we may believe one of his students, Jonathan Edwards, he was not respected by them. While serving as Congregational minister at West Haven, Connecticut, he broke away and allied himself with the Anglican Church, taking orders in the Church of England in 1722. From 1723 to 1754 he served that church as missionary in Stratford, Connecticut. He carried on a philosophical correspondence with Berkeley and Colden. Johnson was a friend of Benjamin Franklin who urged him to take charge of his "Academy" in Philadelphia, but Johnson declined. He became president of King's College (Columbia) in New York and served from 1754 to 1763, when he retired to Stratford as resident minister until his death. He took a prominent part in philosophical polemics against the Calvinists and in the agitations to procure American bishops.

## NOETICA: OR THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF METAPHYSICS AND LOGIC,

Together With the Progress of the Human Mind Towards Its Perfection.<sup>1</sup>

---

### CHAPTER I OF THE MIND IN GENERAL, ITS OBJECTS, AND OPERATIONS

1. It is my design in the following essay, to trace out, in as short a compass as I can, the several steps of the mind of man, from the first impressions of sense, through the

several improvements it gradually makes, till it arrives to that perfection and enjoyment of itself, which is the great end of its being. In order to which, it will first be expedient to define what we mean by the *human mind*, and to give some account of its various objects, powers, and operations, and the principles and rules by which they are to be conducted

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Johnson, *Elementa Philosophica*, Philadelphia: Press of Benjamin Franklin, 1752.

in attaining to the knowledge of truth, which is the business of that science which is called Logic, or *The Art of Thinking or Reasoning*; the foundation of which is the *philosophia prima*, which is also called *Metaphysics* and *Ontology*, or *the Doctrine of the general Notion of Being, with its various Properties and Affections, and those applied in general both to Body and Spirit*. And as Truth and Good are nearly allied, being in effect but the same thing under different considerations, this will pave the way toward the attainment of that supreme Good, in the choice and enjoyment of which consists our highest happiness; the particular consideration of which is the business of *Ethics*, or *Moral Philosophy*, which is *the Art of pursuing our highest Happiness by the universal practice of Virtue*.

2. The word mind or spirit, in general, signifies any intelligent active being, which notion we take from what we are conscious of in ourselves, who know that we have within us a principle of conscious perception, intelligence, activity, and self-exertion; or rather, that each of us is a conscious, perceptive, intelligent, active, and self-exerting being: and by reasoning and analogy from ourselves we apply it to all other minds or intelligencies besides, or superior to us; and (removing all limitations and imperfections) we apply it even to that *Great Supreme Intelligence*, who is the universal parent of all created spirits, and (as far as our words and conceptions can go) may be defined, *an infinite Mind or Spirit, or a Being infinitely intelligent and active*. But by the human mind, we mean that principle of sense, intelligence and free activity, which we feel within ourselves, or rather feel ourselves to be, furnished with those objects and powers, and under those confinements and limitations, under which it hath pleased our great Creator to place us in this present state.

3. We are, at present, spirits or minds connected with gross, tangible bodies, in such manner, that as our bodies can perceive and act nothing but by our minds, so, on the other hand, our minds perceive and act by means of our bodily organs. Such is the present law of our nature, which I conceive to be no other than a meer<sup>2</sup> arbitrary constitution or estab-

lishment of Him that hath made us to be what we are. And accordingly I apprehend that the union between our souls and bodies, during our present state, consists in nothing else but this law of our nature, which is the will and perpetual fiat of that infinite Parent Mind, who made, and holds our souls in life, and in whom we live, and move, and have our being, viz. that our bodies should be thus acted by our minds, and that our minds should thus perceive and act by the organs of our bodies, and under such limitations as in fact we find ourselves to be attended with.

4. The immediate object of these perceptions and actions we call *Ideas*; as this word has been commonly defined and used by the moderns, with whom it signifies any immediate object of the mind in thinking, whether sensible or intellectual, and so is, in effect, synonymous with the word *Thought*, which comprehends both. Plato, indeed, by the word *Idea*, understood the original exemplar of things, whether sensible or intellectual, in the eternal Mind, conformable to which all things exist; or the abstract essences of things, as being originals or *Archetypes* in that infinite Intellect, of which our ideas or conceptions are a kind of copies. But perhaps, for the more distinct understanding ourselves upon this subject, it may be best to confine the word *Idea* to the immediate objects of sense and imagination, which was the original meaning of it; and to use the word *Notion* or *Conception*, to signify the objects of consciousness and pure intellect, tho' both of them may be expressed by the general term *Thought*; for these are so entirely, and *toto Caelo* different and distinct one from the other, that it may be apt to breed confusion in our thoughts and language, to use the same word promiscuously for them both; tho' we are indeed generally obliged to substitute sensible images and the words annexed to them, to represent things purely intellectual; such, for instance, are the words, *Spirit*, *Reflect*, *Conceive*, *Discourse*, and the like.

5. Our minds may be said to be created meer<sup>2</sup> *tabulae rasae*, i.e., they have no notices of any objects of any kind properly created in them, or created with them: Yet I apprehend,

<sup>2</sup> Johnson's spelling in 1752 edition.

<sup>2</sup> Read "mere."

that in all the notices they have of any kind of objects, they have an immediate dependence upon the Deity, as really as they depend upon Him for their existence; i.e., they are no more authors to themselves of the objects of their perceptions, or the light by which they perceive them, than of the power of perceiving itself; but that they perceive them by a perpetual intercourse with that great Parent Mind, to whose incessant agency they are entirely passive, both in all the perceptions of sense, and in all that intellectual light by which they perceive the objects of the pure intellect. Notwithstanding which, it is plain from experience, that in consequence of these perceptions they are entirely at liberty to act, and all their actions flow from a principle of self-exertion. But in order the better to understand these things, I must more particularly define these terms. And as all the notices we have in our minds derive to them originally from (or rather by means of) these two fountains, *Sense* and *Consciousness*, it is necessary to begin with them.

6. By *Sense*, we mean, those perceptions we have of objects *ab extra*, or by means of the several organs of our bodies. Thus, by *Feeling* or touch, we perceive an endless variety of tangible, resistance, extension, figure, motion, hard, soft, heat, cold, etc. By *Sight* we perceive light and colors, with all their endlessly various modifications, red, blue, green, etc. By *Hearing*, we perceive sounds: by *Tasting*, sapsors: by *Smelling*, odors, etc. These are called *Simple Ideas*. And of these, sorted out into a vast variety of fixed combinations, or *Compound Ideas*, distinct from each other, and in which they are always found to coexist, consists every sort and individual *Body* in nature, such as we call man, horse, tree, stone, apple, cherry, etc. And of all these various distinct combinations or compounds, connected together in such a manner as to contribute one most beautiful, useful and harmonious whole, consists what we call *Universal Nature*, or the intire<sup>2</sup> sensible or natural world.

7. In the perception of these ideas or objects of sense, we find our minds are merely<sup>2</sup> passive, it not being in our power (supposing

our organs rightly disposed and situated) whether we will see light and colors, hear sounds, etc. We are not causes to ourselves of these perceptions, nor can they be produced in our minds without a cause; or (which is the same thing) by any imagined unintelligent, inert, or unactive cause (which is a contradiction in terms) from whence it is demonstration that they must derive to us from an Almighty, intelligent active Cause, exhibiting them to us, impressing our minds with them, or producing them in us; and consequently (as I intimated) it must be by a perpetual intercourse of our minds with the Deity, the great Author of our beings, or by His perpetual influence or activity upon them, that they are possessed of all these objects of sense, and the light by which we perceive them.

8. These ideas or objects of sense are commonly supposed to be pictures or representations of things without us, and indeed external to any mind, even that of the Deity himself, and the truth or reality of them is conceived to consist in their being exact pictures of things or objects without us, which are supposed to be the real things. But as it is impossible for us to know what is without our minds, and consequently, what those supposed originals are, and whether these ideas of ours are just resemblances of them or not; I am afraid this notion of them will lead us into an inextricable scepticism. I am therefore apt to think that these ideas or immediate objects of sense, are the real things, at least all that we are concerned with, I mean, of the sensible kind; and that the reality of them consists in their stability and consistence, or their being, in a stable manner, exhibited to our minds, or produced in them, and in a steady connection with each other, conformable to certain fixed laws of nature. which the great *Father of Spirits* hath established to Himself, according to which He constantly operates and affects our minds, and from which He will not vary, unless upon extraordinary occasions, as in the case of miracles.

9. Thus, for instance, there is a fixed stable connection between *things tangible* and *things*

<sup>2</sup> Johnson's spelling in the 1752 edition.

<sup>2</sup> Spelled *merely* in the 1752 edition.

*visible*, or the immediate objects of *Touch* and *Sight*, depending as I conceive, immediately upon the permanent, most wise and Almighty Will and *Fiat* of the great Creator and Preserver of the world. By which, neither can it be meant, that visible objects are pictures of tangible objects (which yet is all the sense that can be made of our ideas of sense being images of real things without us) for they are entirely different and distinct things; as different as the sound *Triangle*, and the figure signified by it; so different, that a man born blind, and made to see, could have no more notion that a visible globe hath any connection with a tangible globe, by meer<sup>1</sup> sight, without being taught, than a Frenchman that should come into England, and hear the word *Man*, could imagine, without being taught, that it signified the same thing with the word *Homme*, in his language. All that can be meant by it, therefore, is, that, as *tangible things* are the things immediately capable of producing (or rather, being attended with) sensible pleasure or pain in us, according to the present laws of our nature, on account of which they are conceived of as being properly the *real Things*; so the immediate *objects of sight* or *visible things*, are always, by the same stable law of our nature, connected with them, and ever correspondent and proportioned to them; *visible extension*, *figure*, *motion*, etc., with those of the *tangible kind*, which go by the same names; and so in the compounds or combinations of them; the visible man, horse, tree, stone, etc. with those of the tangible kind, signified by the same names.<sup>2</sup>

10. Not that it is to be doubted but that there are *Archetypes* of these sensible ideas existing, external to our minds; but then they must exist in some other mind, and be ideas also as well as ours; because an idea can resemble nothing but an idea; and an idea ever implies in the very nature of it, relation to a mind perceiving it, or in which it exists. But then those archetypes or originals, and the manner of their existence in that eternal

mind, must be entirely different from that of their existence in our minds; as different, as the manner of His existence is from that of ours: in Him they must exist, as in original Intellect; in us, only by way of sense and imagination; and in Him, as originals; in us, only as faint copies; such as he thinks fit to communicate to us, according to such laws and limitations as he hath established, and such as are sufficient to all the purposes relating to our well-being, in which only we are concerned. Our ideas, therefore, can no otherwise be said to be images or copies of the archetypes in the eternal Mind, than as our souls are said to be images of Him, or as are said to be made after his image.<sup>3</sup>

11. Thus much for sense. By *Consciousness* is meant, our perception of objects *ab intra*, or from reflecting or turning the eye of the mind inward, and observing what passeth within itself; whereby we know that we perceive all those sensible objects and their connections, and all the pleasures and pains attending them, and all the powers or faculties of our minds employed about them. Thus I am conscious that I perceive light and colors, sounds, odors, savors, and tangible qualities, with all the various combinations of them; and that of these, some give me, or rather are attended with pain or uneasiness, others with pleasure or ease, and the comfortable enjoyment of myself. I find, moreover, that when I have had any perception or impression of sense, I retain a faint *Image* of it in my mind afterwards, or have a kind of internal sense or remembrance of it; as having seen a sun, a flower, a horse, or a man, I retain the image of their figure, shape, color, etc. afterwards. Thus I have now a faint idea of the sun at midnight, and of a rose in winter: I know how such a tree, such a horse, or such a man looks, tho' I have neither of them before my eyes. This power of the mind is called *imagination* and *memory*, which implies a consciousness of the original impression (tho' indeed the word *memory* may imply the recollection of intellectual as well as sensible objects, but chiefly

<sup>1</sup> Read "mere."

<sup>2</sup> See Bishop Berkeley's *Theories of Vision, Principles of Human Knowledge, and Three Dialogues*. (This reference is Johnson's.)

<sup>3</sup> See on this Head, Norris's *Ideal World*, part 1. (Johnson's note.)

those by means of these, which is also called *reminiscence*) and these ideas of the imagination may be truly said to be images or pictures of the ideas or immediate objects of sense. We are moreover conscious of a power whereby we can, not only imagine things as being what they really are in nature, but can also join such parts and properties of things together, as never co-existed in nature, but a meer <sup>2</sup> creatures of our minds, or chimeras; as the head of a man with the body of an horse, etc., which must also be referred to the imagination, but as influenced by the will.

12. But besides these powers of sense and imagination, we are conscious of what is called the *pure Intellect*, or the power of conceiving of abstracted or *spiritual Objects*, and the *Relations* between our several ideas and conceptions, and the various dispositions, exertions and actions of our minds, and the complex notions resulting from all these; of all which we cannot be properly said to have *ideas*, they being intirely <sup>2</sup> of a different kind from the objects of sense and imagination, on which account I would rather call them *Notions* or *Conceptions*. And they are either *simple*, such as *perception, consciousness, volition, affection, action*, etc. or *complex*, as *spirit, soul, God, cause, effect, proportion, justice, charity*, etc. And of all these, and what relates to them, consists the intire <sup>2</sup> *spiritual* or *moral world*. But in order the better to understand or conceive of these, it is necessary more particularly to pursue and explain these intellectual and active powers, whereof we are conscious within ourselves; such as, 1. The *simple apprehension* of objects, and their several relations, connections and dependencies, arising from our comparing our ideas and conceptions one with another. 2. *Judging* of *true* or *false*, according as things appear to agree or disagree, to be connected or not connected with one another; and 3. *Reasoning* or inferring one thing from another, and methodizing them according to their connections and order; all of which are the subject of *Logics*. To which succeed, 1. *Affecting* or *Disaffecting* them according as they appear *good* or *bad*, agreeable or disagreeable to us, i.e., attended with pleasure or uneasiness.

2. *Willing* or *Nilling*, *Chusing* <sup>2</sup> or *Refusing* according as we affect or disaffect them. 3. *Liberty* of *Acting*, or forbearing to act in consequence of the judgment and choice we have made of them: all which are the subject of *Ethics*. It is necessary to define all these terms, and give some account of these several acts and exertions of our minds (which as well as those of sense, consciousness, imagination and memory above-mentioned, are only so many modifications of them) in order to what is next to follow.

13. But before I proceed, I would, in order thereunto, first observe, that no sooner does any object strike the senses, or is received in our imagination, or apprehended by our understanding, but we are immediately conscious of a kind of *intellectual Light* within us (if I may so call it) whereby we not only know that we perceive the object, but directly apply ourselves to the consideration of it, both in itself, its properties and powers, and as it stands related to all other things. And we find that as we are enabled by this *intellectual Light* to perceive these objects and their various relations, in like manner as by *sensible Light* we are enabled to perceive the objects of sense and their various situations; <sup>2</sup> so our minds are as passive to this *intellectual Light*, as they are to *sensible Light*, and can no more withstand the evidence of it, than they can withstand the evidence of sense. Thus I am under the same necessity to assent to this, that *I am* or have a being, and that I *perceive* and *freely exert myself*, as I am of assenting to this, that I see colors or hear sounds. I am as perfectly sure that  $2 + 2 = 4$ , or that the whole is equal to all its parts, as that I feel heat or cold, or that I see the sun when I look on it in the meridian in a clear day; i.e. I am intuitively certain of both. This intellectual light I conceive of as it were a *Medium* of knowledge, as sensible light is of sight: In both there is the *power* of perceiving, and the *object* perceived; and this is the *Medium* by which I am enabled to know it. And this *Light* is one, and common to all intelligent beings, and enlighteneth alike, every man that cometh into the world, a Chinese, or Japanese, as well as an European or American, and

<sup>2</sup> Johnson's spelling.

<sup>2</sup> This is Plato's Doctrine, in his *Epinomis*, etc. (Johnson's note.)

an Angel as well as a man: By which they all at once see the same thing to be true or right in all places at the same time, and alike invariably in all times, past, present, and to come.

14. Now if it be asked, Whence does this light derive, whereby all created minds at once perceive, as by a common standard, the same things alike to be true and right? I answer, I have no other way to conceive how I come to be affected with this intuitive intellectual light, whereof I am conscious, than by deriving it from the universal presence and action of the Deity, or a perpetual communication with the great *Father of Lights*,<sup>1</sup> or rather his eternal *Word* and *Spirit*. For I know I am not the author of it to myself, being passive and not active with regard to it, tho' I am active in consequence of it. Therefore, tho' I cannot explain the manner how I am impressed with it (as neither can I that of sense) I do humbly conceive that God does as truly and immediately enlighten my mind internally to know these intellectual objects, as he does by the light of the sun (his sensible representative) enable me to perceive sensible objects. So that those expressions are no less philosophical than devout, that God is light, and in his light we see light. And this intuitive knowledge, as far as it goes, must be the *first principles*, from which the mind takes

its rise, and upon which it proceeds in all its subsequent improvements in reasoning, and discovering both truth in speculation, and right in action; so that this intellectual light must be primarily and carefully attended to, if we would avoid and be secure from either error or vice. Nor must this manner of thinking be suspected to favor of *Enthusiasm*, it being the settled course or law of nature, according to which the great Parent Mind enlighteneth us; and that in things, in their own nature capable of clear evidence; whereas *Enthusiasm* implies an *imaginary*, as *Revelation* is a real and well-attested adventitious light, above and beyond the settled law or course of nature, discovering truths not otherwise knowable, and giving directions, or enjoining rules of action in things arbitrary, or matters of meer<sup>2</sup> institution. And from this intuitive intellectual light it is (as I conceive) that we derive what we call *taste* and *judgment*, and, with respect to morals, what some call the moral sense or the conscience, which are only a sort of quick intuitive sense or apprehension of the decent and amiable, or beauty and deformity, of true and false, and of right and wrong, or duty and sin: And it is the chief business of culture, art and instruction, to awaken and turn our attention to it, and assist us in making deductions from it.

## ETHICS: OR MORAL PHILOSOPHY

### THE INTRODUCTION

3. *ETHICS* is the art of living happily, by the right knowledge of ourselves, and the practice of virtue: our *happiness* being the end, and *knowledge* and *virtue*, the means to that end.

12. *Moral good* must therefore consist in freely chusing and acting conformable to the *Truth* and *Nature* of *Things*, or to things, affections and actions, considered as being what they really are, i.e., as tending, or not tending to our true happiness, as being what *we* really are: Or (which is the same thing) in chusing

and acting according to the *Fitness of Things*, or to things, affections and actions, considered as fit or subservient, in their own nature, to promote our best *Good* and happiness in the *whole*. And this again is the same thing with acting according to *right Reason* (which has been sometimes called the *Criterion*) it being by the right use of our reason that we apprehend things as being what they really are. . . .<sup>3</sup>

15. The law of *Reason* and *Conscience* is, I think, the same thing which some have called

<sup>1</sup> See the Archbishop of Cambray, on this subject, in his demonstration of the existence of God. And Norris or Malbranch. (Johnson's note.)

<sup>2</sup> Johnson's spelling.

<sup>3</sup> In an earlier paragraph Johnson has directed his reader on this same point to consult Clarke and Wollaston.

the *moral sense*,<sup>1</sup> being a kind of quick and almost intuitive sense of right and wrong, deriving, as I conceive, from the perpetual presence and irradiation of the Deity in our minds, and dictating with a strong and commanding force what is reasonable, fair and decent, and so fit and right to be done, and giving us applause and satisfaction when we conform to it, and blaming and reproaching us, and filling us with uneasiness and remorse, when we act contrary to its dictates: It being the law of our nature, that we should always affect and act conformable to the inward sense of our own minds and consciences. And those consequent pleasing or uneasy sentiments, considering it as a law, are its sanctions.

25. So that upon the whole it appears, that *Moraliry*, in the just extent of it, is the same thing with the *Religion of Nature*, or that religion which is founded in the nature of things; and that it may be defined, *the pursuit of our true happiness by thinking, affecting and acting, according to the laws of truth and right reason, under a sense of the duty that we owe to Almighty God, and the account we must expect to give of ourselves to Him.*<sup>2</sup> Since therefore *Truth* and *Duty* are thus necessarily connected, it must be our business in this essay, to search out all the *truths* that relate both to ourselves, to God, and to our fellow creatures, and thence to deduce the several *duties* that do necessarily result from them.

26. Now these may all be reduced to that grand ancient principle of true wisdom, *Know thyself*; which must imply, not meerly the knowledge of ourselves, singly considered, but also in all the relations wherein we stand; for this is the knowledge of ourselves in the whole: And because we are active as well as intelligent creatures, and our happiness depends on action as well as thinking, it must therefore be understood to mean a *practical Knowledge*.

27. Let therefore everyone, in order to the right knowledge of himself, and his duty and happiness, and that he may the more effectually be engaged in practice, thus seriously reflect and enquire concerning himself. I. Who

am I? II. How came I to be what I am? III. For what end was I made and have my being? IV. What ought I immediately to do, and be, in order to answer the end of my being? V. Whether I am what I ought to be? If not, VI. what ought I to do, as a means, in order to be and do what I ought, and in order finally to answer the end of my being? The three first of these enquiries will discover the truths; and the three last, the duties, that we are concerned to know and to do in order to our true happiness: And the truths are the speculative, and the duties are the practical part of moral philosophy.

#### PART I

#### THE SPECULATIVE PART OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY

#### CHAPTER II

#### OF THE AUTHOR OF OUR NATURE, HIS PERFECTIONS AND OPERATIONS

2. I know that I have a being, because I perceive and act, and that I must have had a beginning of existence, because there must have been a time when I did not perceive or act, and I can have no notion of the existence of an intelligent active being, without conscious perception and activity. And if I began to be, I must have been made. It is certain I could not come into being by meer *Chance*, for that is nothing but an empty name, which we vulgarly use only as a cover to our ignorance or inadvertence. I also know I did not make myself... so that I find I am wholly a limited and dependent being.

3. It is therefore certain, that I must have had a cause; for an effect, or thing made, without a cause, is a contradiction, and can have no meaning: There must then be some other being on whom I depend. And since there cannot be an effect without a cause, it is evident that the cause of my being must have powers capable of producing such an effect; otherwise there would still be an effect without a cause, than which nothing can be more absurd. It is evident that my parents could not be adequate causes; they could, at most, be only the occasions or instruments of

<sup>1</sup> Vide, Shaftesbury, Hutchinson, and Preceptor, or Turnbull. (Johnson's note.)

<sup>2</sup> Vide Crousaz's *Art of Thinking*, p. 60, vol. I. (Johnson's note.)



my being; for it never was in their power that I should be at all, or being, that I should be such as I am; nor could they continue me a moment in being, health, or ease. It is therefore plain that I must look higher for an adequate cause, both of my existence and subsistence.

4. It is moreover manifest, that no cause can give what it hath not, or, which is the same thing, produce an effect more noble, or of greater powers or perfections than itself; for then again, there would be an effect without a cause, or something produced by nothing, which is impossible. Hence, therefore, it is plain, that what is destitute of perception, consciousness and intelligence, cannot produce a perceptive, conscious, intelligent being: What is void of any principle of deliberation, liberty and activity, cannot produce a considerate, free, active being, etc. It is consequently evident, that the being who brought me into being, must himself be possessed of powers or perfections analogous to those I experience in myself.

5. Since, therefore, I know I have some considerable degrees of understanding, knowledge, will, force and activity, with freedom of deliberation, choice and design, and the powers of self-exertion, and self-determination, together with some sense of benevolence, and of right and wrong, or equity and iniquity, and some disposition to do the one, and avoid the other it is from hence evident, that the Almighty Being, who made me, and whom I call God, being the genuine and adequate cause, from whom I am derived, must himself have understanding, knowledge, will, force, and activity; must have liberty, choice, deliberation, self-exertion, and self-determination; and must be a being of equity, justice, and goodness, and all other moral perfections, which are implied in these, and which are comprehended under the terms holiness and rectitude. And as I am thus truly made by him, and in some measure to resemble Him, He must therefore be strictly and properly my *Parent*, or the *Father of my Spirit*.

6. Now what I thus argue from myself to the cause of my existence, must be equally true of every other intelligent active being, that knows he must have had a beginning of

existence, and is limited and dependent, however so perfect, as well as of me. From whence it is evident, that this universal cause must be possessed of the highest perfections and powers that are conceivable, or do at all obtain, and that he must hold them entirely independent of any other being whatsoever: And, being independent of any other being, it is evident, that He cannot be under the power of any other being to limit or control Him, and that all other beings must be entirely dependent upon Him, and consequently must have derived from His Will and Power, and therefore be limited to various degrees of being and perfection, as pleaseth Him. So that He must hold, possess and enjoy *all possible Perfection* in and of Himself, without any possible limitation or imperfection, and must be the universal *Father of Spirits*, and was accordingly by the wisest of the Ancients, stiled, *The Father of the Universe*.<sup>1</sup> . . .

7. Since, therefore, he thus exists, independent of all other beings, and they, by the necessity of their nature, derive from Him, and depend on Him, it is plain that he must exist originally by the absolute necessity of his nature without any cause, and consequently be *All in All*, all that truly *is*, all perfection and fulness of being, or *Being* and perfection, by way of eminency, and so He alone must be the *necessarily existent Being*, or that Being, to whom it is peculiar that *Existence* is necessarily implied in his very *Essence*. . . .

8. Nor can there be more than *One* such being, because it is thus evident that He alone can *necessarily exist*, and that *all possible perfections* are united in Him, or *One* in Him; it being a contradiction, that two or more beings should each have all possible perfection. And since He must thus have such an absolute fulness of being, He is on that account said to be *Truth* and *Good*, by way of eminency: He is *Truth*, as in Him there is all reality, and *Good*, as in Him there is all excellency, even every thing that can contribute to render both Himself and all His creatures entirely happy; and He is called *Truth*, as He is intelligible; and *Good*, as he is eligible. He must therefore be the source of all happiness, both with regard to the intellect, will, affections, and activity.

<sup>1</sup> Vide Clarke's and Burnet's *Boyle's Lectures*.

9. In this method of reasoning it is evident, that the great Cause or Author of my being and powers, and those of all other spirits, or intelligent active beings, must necessarily be *infinite, eternal, and unchangeable*. For (it is) out of the power of every other being to limit or control Him. . . .

10. Nor can I doubt of the existence of such a *necessary and eternal Being*, from the existence of *necessary and eternal Truth*. There are a great number of evident truths that come within our reach, which I find exist necessarily and eternally independent of my mind, or any other created mind whatsoever, by the light and evidence of many of which (to which I find my mind is passive) I am enabled to judge of true and false, and of right and wrong, in every particular case: Such as these, action implies existence; an effect must suppose a cause; the whole is bigger than either of its parts; things equal to another are equal among themselves; what is right or wrong in another towards me, must be equally right or wrong in me towards him, etc. Now, these and the like truths imply the necessary habits of certain essences that do not depend on any particular existences in nature, and must therefore have an antecedent mental or intellectual existence; and there can be no conception of truth without a mind perceiving it, or in which it exists. Since, therefore, there are eternal truths necessarily existing, independent of any created mind, or any thing existing in nature, it is evident there must be an eternal, necessarily existing, independent Mind, in which they originally exist, as one eternal light of truth, and by whom they are exhibited to all other minds in various measures, according to their several capacities and application, enabling them to judge of every particular thing that comes within their notice.<sup>1</sup> He is therefore the great *Parent Mind*, from whom derives all light and knowledge to every created intelligence, being, as it were, the intellectual sun enlightening our minds, as the sensible sun, by his incessant activity, enlighteneth our eyes.

11. What I have thus argued from my own existence, powers, and faculties, and those of

every other intelligent and active creature, and from the existence of eternal truth, may be also demonstrated from the existence of every sensible thing that I see, hear and feel, from without me. I know that I am not the cause of any of those impressions that are made upon my senses; light, colors, sounds, tangible qualities, etc. I am sure they do not depend upon my will and activity; for I am intirely passive in the reception of them. Nor can they be without a cause, nor yet from any senseless, inert or unactive cause, for that is a contradiction in terms. They must therefore be the constant effects of an intelligent cause, intimately present with me, and incessantly active upon me, who continually produceth all these sensations in my mind, correspondent to the archetypes in his all-comprehending Intellect, according to certain stable laws, or fixed rules, which He hath established to Himself, and which are commonly called the *Laws of Nature*. When therefore I consider the whole system of these sensible, as well as the intelligible, objects that surround me, and under the impression of which I continually live, I must conclude, that *I live, and move, and have my being*, in Him, who is the perpetual and Almighty Author of them.<sup>2</sup>

12. I find these sensible objects are all firmly connected together, things visible with things tangible, and all the various combinations of them one with another, so as to constitute one most beautiful and useful whole, which we call the *natural World*; in all which I do manifestly discern the most wise design, and the most exquisite contrivance and adjustment of ends and means from whence I gather, that they must be the effects of a most wise and designing cause. And I do evidently experience that they are all contrived in the best manner to render them subservient to all the purposes of my subsistence and well-being, and that of the whole rational and moral system, which we call the *Moral World*; from whence I must conclude the glorious Author of them to be, not only an infinitely *wise and powerful*, but moreover an infinitely *kind and benevolent* Being.

<sup>1</sup> Vide Norris's *Ideal World and Miscellanies*, and Cambray's *Demonstration*. (Johnson's note.)

<sup>2</sup> Vide Bishop Berkeley's *Dialogues*, pp. 78, 79, etc. (Johnson's note.)

13. I do not, indeed, find, upon a close examination, that there is any necessary connection between them, for instance, between the objects of *sight* and *feeling*; the one appears to have only the nature of a sign with regard to the other, being all alike, meer passive perceptions in our minds, between which there can be no relation of causality: So that the connection between them, tho' stable, is entirely arbitrary; as is that between the sound, *Man*, and the thing signified by it: From whence I gather, that I must unavoidably consider the one with regard to the other, to have the nature of a wonderful language,<sup>1</sup> whereby the great Author of Nature appears to be continually present with me, discovering his mind and will to me (and that in a stable and invariable manner, which I find I can always depend upon) and, as it were, speaking to me, and directing me how to act, and conduct myself in all the affairs of life; whereby he manifestly discovereth a constant watchful *Providence* over me in all my ways. From whence it is evident, not only that He is, but that He must be, both a being of infinite goodness, wisdom, and power, and of the most stable truth, and invariable integrity.

14. I do moreover see and feel a vast variety of *Motions*, on the laws of which, most wisely contrived, dependeth the whole order, harmony and usefulness of the natural world. But it is certain that nothing corporeal can move itself, being, as such, meerly passive and inert; and yet it is no less evident, that motion implies force and activity in the mover; and since nothing can act where it is not, it manifestly follows, that in all the wisely contrived motions of nature, as well as all other objects of sense, both in the heavens above, and in the earth below, we constantly see and feel the universal presence of that most wisely designing, and most powerfully active, all-comprehending Mind, who both begins and continues motion, and is therefore the Almighty Author and Preserver of all things.

15. I say, we both *see and feel his universal presence*; for it is manifest, that He may as truly be said to be an object of sense as any

human person; for, what do I see when I behold a king? Not the spirit or soul, which is properly the person, and which, in the nature of it, cannot be an object of sense; I see only the shape and color of a man, clothed with gorgeous robes. In like manner, I cannot see God, as He is a Spirit, and, as such, is invisible; but I as truly see Him, as I see a man like myself; nay, indeed, more manifestly that I can behold any mortal man; for I see Him in every visible shape and form in all nature; I behold Him in all the infinitely various modifications of light and colors throughout the whole creation; in all which, He is everywhere present, being, as it were, clothed with light, as with a garment; which expression is rightly observed to be of like import with that saying of the ancient Eastern sages, that God hath light for his body, and truth for his soul.<sup>2</sup> In the same manner, I may truly say, I feel Him in the heat and wind, and in every tangible figure and motion, etc. I hear Him in every sound, and taste Him in every morsel, etc. In a word, I must again say, it is He who is *All in All*.

16. Furthermore (not to descend to that infinite world of minute creatures, which the microscope opens to our view, and which gives us surprising apprehensions of the Deity) as I observe all these sensible objects about me, are connected together, in a wonderful manner, into one most beautiful and useful system, and made subservient to my subsistence and well-being, and those of my species, in this mansion allotted to us; so I . . . observe this globe, on which we live, to be no less wonderfully connected with the sun and other planets, with us surrounding and depending on him, so that they all make one entire system; the other globes being probably designed for uses analogous to this of ours. And as the prodigious number of fixed stars seem to be of the same nature, so it is probable they are designed for the like purposes with those for which I find our sun, the great source of light and life to us, is manifestly fitted and designed, and consequently may have globes like ours, depending on them. If so, as this gives me a stupendous idea of the vast extent and variety

<sup>1</sup> Vide *Minute Philosopher*, Dial. 4. (Johnson's note.)

<sup>2</sup> Vide *Minute Philosopher*, Dial. 4. # 5, and 15. (Johnson's note.)

of the mighty works of God, so it must give me astounding apprehensions of His excellent greatness, majesty and glory, who must be equally present with them all, and does alike display his infinite wisdom, power and goodness in them, to all the admiring beholders; having His whole vast family of heaven and earth, alike depending upon Him, and deriving their all from Him, in all places of His dominion.

17. What is thus evident to me from the frame and constitution of the natural world, is no less evident from the constitution of the moral world. For, as I see all the order, harmony, and usefulness of nature depends on the laws of (what is called) *attraction*, by which the vast globes keep their situations, and proceed incessantly in their perpetual rounds, and all the parts and appendages of each globe are firmly kept together; and also on the surprising *instincts* by which the several tribes of animals are led to provide for their subsistence; and the continuance of their species, which can no otherwise be accounted for, than from the meer passive impressions of the great Almighty Mind, that subsists and governs the world in the best and wisest manner; So I observe all the order, harmony and happiness of the *moral world*, depends on the laws of *Benevolence* which taking its rise in the natural affection between the sexes, parents, children, and other relatives, spreads through the whole species, strongly attaching them to social life; which strong tendency of *Benevolence* in the moral world, is plainly analogous to *attraction* and *instincts* in the natural, and must accordingly be a like passive impression of the same great Parent-governing Mind, who plainly designs hereby to keep the moral world together, and in order; and by Him also it is manifest, that all created minds are passively enlightened, to have a quick sense, and intuitive evidence of the fit, the fair, and decent in behaviour (*Introd.* 15 and chap. II. #10) and thence, the laws by which this principle of benevolence must be regulated, in order to their universal harmony and happiness. From hence, therefore, also evidently appears, not only His existence, omnipresence, and infinite wisdom and power, but

also his infinite benevolence and equity, befitting the character of Him, who is the great Father and Lord of the Universe.

20. If now it be enquired, How I came to be such an imperfect, frail, sinful being, as I am? Or how could it be, that the wise and good God that made me, who is Himself the most perfect and best of beings, should make me such an imperfect, sinful and miserable creature, as I find myself to be? To this I must answer in the following manner: That God should make me such an imperfect (or less perfect) creature as I am, compared with others, or with what I can easily imagine, I see no reason to doubt; inasmuch as my being itself, and every perfection in it, must be His sovereign free gift, and what He was in no wise obliged to bestow. He is the sovereign lord of His favors, and must therefore be intirely at liberty to bestow such degrees of being and perfection, and such advantages, greater or less, as He thinks fit; and it appears that He hath delighted in a boundless variety in all His works.

21. Indeed that He should, without any voluntary fault of mine, put me into a condition that is, in the whole, worse than not to be, or that He should, in giving me my being, lay me under an absolute necessity of being finally sinful and miserable; this would be a very hard case indeed: But this I must think utterly impossible, as being what I cannot think consistent with His wisdom, holiness, justice and goodness, above demonstrated.<sup>2</sup> . . .

22. And as to my being so sinful a creature as I must confess I am, this I cannot ascribe to God; for since the formal notion of sin consists in the voluntary opposition of our wills to the known Will of God, or the constitution which He hath made, it must be the fault of my will, and not of His; and accordingly my own conscience tells me, whenever I do amiss that I myself (and not He) am the cause, and true author of all the wickedness I commit. . . .

23. If now I should ask, why hath God made me at all peccable, or capable of sin? This would be the same as to ask, why hath

<sup>2</sup> Vide Wollast. R. N., p. 200. (Johnson's note.)

He made me capable of duty? Or, why hath He made me a free agent? But this would be a strange question; for without liberty I should be destitute of one of the chief excellencies of my rational nature, and should not be capable of either duty or sin, properly speaking; for as sin consists in a free and voluntary disobedience, so duty consists in a free and willing obedience to the known Will of God. So that without a power of liberty or free agency, there could have been no such thing as either virtue or vice, praise or blame; nor can either the one or the other obtain, but in proportion to the knowledge we have, or may have, of what we ought to do, and the powers we are furnished with, either to do or forbear.<sup>1</sup>

24. And, lastly, as to the many pains, calamities, and dissolution, to which I am liable I must think, that as I am a sinner, I need a course of discipline: That it is fit natural evil should attend moral evil, as the best means for the cure of it: And that therefore God, having it in view that we would abuse our liberty, not only justly, but wisely and kindly ordered these calamities, as being the fittest means that could have been used to bring us to repentance and reformation, and to discipline us to virtue, by mortifying our lusts, and disengaging us from those objects that are most apt to ensnare and mislead us; and, at the same time, they give us occasion

and opportunity for the exercise of several virtues of very great use towards the perfecting our reasonable and active nature, which otherwise could have had no place; and since we cannot, as things now are, be completely happy here, they lead us to the hopes of a better state hereafter.

25. Thus it appears to me, that, without any imputation upon either the wisdom, power, justice or goodness of God, we may sufficiently account for all the sin and calamity that obtain in the world. But if, after all, there should be some untoward appearances in the conduct of providence that we cannot clearly account for, they ought not to be admitted as any just objections against what hath been antecedently demonstrated; especially since we should be very vain indeed, to think ourselves qualified to be competent judges of *the deep things of God*. We see but a small part, a very short scene of the vast *Drama*, and therefore are not able to make any tolerable judgment of the whole: so that what to us may have the appearance of evil, may, in the whole, have the nature of good; and it becometh us, for that reason, to have an implicit faith in the infinite wisdom, power, justice and goodness of the Deity, above demonstrated, that it will prove so in the whole and result of things. And that this expectation may appear the more reasonable, I proceed now to the next enquiry.

<sup>1</sup> Vide Wollast. R. N., p. 62. (Johnson's note.)

## John Woolman

(1720-1772)

A TESTIMONY of the monthly meeting of Friends in Burlington, New Jersey, shortly after his death relates that Woolman "was born in Northampton, in the County of Burlington, and the Providence of West-New-Jersey, in the eighth month, 1720, of religious Parents, who instructed him very early in the Principles of the Christian Religion, as professed by the People called Quakers." He entered the ministry about his twenty-second year. He met his death through illness from smallpox while in England. As a Friend he was attentive to the "inner light" which led him into a sensitiveness to human misery, exploitation, and evil. He came to long for the day when oppression would cease. The simple life and non-participation in exploitation became his positive program of action. He would wear undyed clothes so as not to be involved in the slave-ridden dye trade. He walked long distances so that he would have no complicity in the miseries suffered by little postboys employed in the chaises. Living before the clear emergence of the capitalist era in America, his philosophy did not turn to objective social reconstruction. Nevertheless, the institutions of slavery, war, and factory exploitation were resolutely challenged by an invincible religious radicalism.

### THE JOURNAL OF JOHN WOOLMAN<sup>1</sup>

ON THE ninth Day of the eighth Month, in the Year 1757, at Night, Orders came to the military Officers in our County (*Burlington*), directing them to draught the Militia, and prepare a Number of men to go off as Soldiers, to the Relief of the *English* at *Fort-William-Henry*, in *New-York* Government: A few Days after which there was a general Review of the *Militia* at *Mount-Holly*, and a Number of Men chosen and sent off under some Officers.

Shortly after, there came Orders to draught three Times as many, to hold themselves in Readiness to march when fresh Orders came: And, on the 17th Day of the eighth Month, there was a Meeting of the military Officers at *Mount-Holly*, who agreed on a Draught; and Orders were sent to the Men, so chosen, to meet their respective Captains at set Times and Places; those in our Township to meet at *Mount-Holly*; amongst whom was a consider-

<sup>1</sup> Being portions of chapter v.

able Number of our Society. My Mind being affected herewith, I had fresh Opportunity to see and consider the Advantage of living in the real Substance of Religion, where Practice doth harmonize with Principle. Amongst the Officers are Men of Understanding, who have some Regard to Sincerity where they see it; and in the Execution of their Office, when they have Men to deal with whom they believe to be upright-hearted, to put them to Trouble, on account of Scruples of Conscience, is a painful Task, and likely to be avoided as much as easily may be: But where Men profess to be so meek and heavenly-minded, and to have their Trust so firmly settled in God, that they cannot join in Wars, and yet, by their Spirit and Conduct in common Life, manifest a contrary Disposition, their Difficulties are great at such a Time.

Officers, in great Anxiety, endeavouring to get Troops to answer the Demands of their Superiors, seeing Men, who are insincere, pretend Scruple of Conscience in Hopes of being excused from a dangerous Employment, such are likely to be roughly handled. In this Time of Commotion some of our young Men left the Parts, and tarried abroad till it was over; some came, and proposed to go as Soldiers; others appeared to have a real tender Scruple in their Minds against joining in Wars, and were much humbled under the Apprehension of a Trial so near: I had Conversation with several of them to my Satisfaction. At the set Time when the Captain came to Town, some of those last-mentioned went and told him in Substance as follows: — That they could not bear Arms for Conscience-ake; nor could they hire any to go in their Places, being resigned as to the Event of it: At length the Captain acquainted them all, that they might return Home for the present, and required them to provide themselves as Soldiers, and to be in Readiness to march when called upon. This was such a Time as I had not seen before; and yet I may say, with Thankfulness to the Lord, that I believed this Trial was intended for our Good; and I was favoured with Resignation to him. The *French Army*, taking the Fort they were besieging, destroyed it and went away: The Company of Men first draughted, after some

Days march, had Orders to return Home; and those on the second Draught were no more called upon on that Occasion.

On the fourth Day of the fourth Month, in the Year 1758, Orders came to some Officers in *Mount-Holly*, to prepare Quarters, a short Time, for about one hundred Soldiers: And an Officer and two other Men, all Inhabitants of our Town, came to my House; and the Officer told me, that he came to speak with me, to provide Lodging and Entertainment for two Soldiers, there being six Shillings a Week per Man allowed as Pay for it. The Case being new and unexpected, I made no Answer suddenly; but sat a Time silent, my Mind being inward: I was fully convinced, that the Proceedings in Wars are inconsistent with the Purity of the *Christian Religion*: And to be hired to entertain Men, who were then under Pay as Soldiers, was a Difficulty with me. I expected they had legal Authority for what they did; and, after a short Time, I said to the Officer, If the Men are sent here for Entertainment, I believe I shall not refuse to admit them into my House; but the Nature of the Case is such, that I expect I cannot keep them on Hire: One of the Men intimated, that he thought I might do it consistent with my religious Principles; To which I made no Reply; as believing Silence at that Time best for me. Though they spake of two, there came only one, who tarried at my House about two Weeks, and behaved himself civilly; and when the Officer came to pay me, I told him I could not take Pay for it, having admitted him into my House in a passive Obedience to Authority. I was on Horseback when he spake to me: And, as I turned from him, he said, he was obliged to me: To which I said nothing; but, thinking on the Expression, I grew uneasy; and afterwards, being near where he lived, I went and told him on what Grounds I refused taking Pay for keeping the Soldier.

Near the Beginning of the Year 1758, I went one Evening, in Company with a Friend, to visit a sick Person; and, before our Return, we were told of a Woman living near, who, of late, had several Days been disconsolate, occasioned by a Dream; wherein Death, and the Judgments of the Almighty after Death, were

represented to her Mind in a moving Manner: Her Sadness on that Account, being worn off, the Friend, with whom I was in Company, went to see her, and had some religious Conversation with her and her Husband: With this Visit they were somewhat affected; and the Man, with many Tears, expressed his Satisfaction; and, in a short Time after, the poor Man being on the River in a Storm of Wind, he, with one more, was drowned.

In the eighth Month of the Year 1758, having had Drawings in my Mind to be at the Quarterly-meeting in *Chester* County, and at some Meetings in the County of *Philadelphia*, I went first to said Quarterly-meeting, which was large, and several weighty Matters came under Consideration and Debate; and the Lord was pleased to qualify some of his Servants with Strength and Firmness to bear the Burthen of the Day: Though I said but little, my Mind was deeply exercised; and, under a Sense of God's Love, in the Anointing and fitting some young Men for his Work, I was comforted, and my Heart was tendered before him. From hence I went to the Youth's Meeting at *Darby*, where my beloved Friend and Brother, BENJAMIN JONES, met me, by an Appointment before I left Home, to join in the Visit: And we were at *Radnor*, *Merion*, *Richland*, *North-Wales*, *Plymouth*, and *Abington* Meetings; and had Cause to bow in Reverence before the Lord, our gracious God, by whose Help Way was opened for us from day to day. I was out about two Weeks, and rode about two hundred Miles.

The Monthly-meeting of *Philadelphia* having been under a Concern on Account of some Friends who this Summer (1758) had bought Negro Slaves, the said Meeting moved it to their Quarterly-meeting, to have the Minute reconsidered in the Yearly-meeting, which was made last on that Subject: And the said Quarterly-meeting appointed a Committee to consider it, and report to their next; which Committee having met once and adjourned, I going to *Philadelphia* to meet a Committee of the Yearly-meeting, was in Town the Evening on which the Quarterly-meeting's Committee met the second Time; and, finding an Inclination to sit with them, was, with some others, admitted; and Friends had a weighty

Conference on the Subject: And, soon after their next Quarterly-meeting, I heard that the Case was coming to our Yearly-meeting; which brought a weighty Exercise upon me, and under a Sense of my own Infirmities, and the great Danger I felt of turning aside from perfect Purity, my Mind was often drawn to retire alone, and put up my Prayers to the Lord, that he would be graciously pleased to strengthen me, that, setting aside all Views of Self-interest, and the Friendship of the World, I might stand fully resigned to his holy Will.

In this Yearly-meeting, several weighty Matters were considered; and, toward the last, that in Relation to dealing with Persons who purchase Slaves. During the several Sitzings of the said Meeting, my Mind was frequently covered with inward Prayer, and I could say with *David*, that *Tears were my Meat Day and Night*. The Case of Slave-keeping lay heavy upon me; nor did I find any Engagement to speak directly to any other Matter before the Meeting. Now, when this Case was opened, several faithful Friends spake weightily thereto, with which I was comforted; and, feeling a Concern to cast in my Mite, I said in Substance as follows:

"In the Difficulties attending us in this Life, nothing is more precious than the Mind of Truth inwardly manifested; and it is my earnest Desire that, in this weighty Matter we may be so truly humbled as to be favoured with a clear Understanding of the Mind of Truth, and follow it; this would be of more Advantage to the Society, than any Medium not in the Clearness of divine Wisdom. The Case is difficult to some who have them; but if such set aside all Self-interest, and come to be weaned from the Desire of getting Estates, or even from holding them together, when Truth requires the Contrary, I believe Way will open that they will know how to steer through those Difficulties."

Many Friends appeared to be deeply bowed under the Weight of the Work; and manifested much Firmness in their Love to the Cause of Truth and universal Righteousness on the Earth: And, though none did openly justify the Practice of Slave-keeping in general, yet some appeared concerned, lest the



Meeting should go into such Measures as might give Uneasiness to many Brethren; alledging, that if Friends patiently continued under the Exercise, the Lord, in Time to come might open a Way for the Deliverance of these People: And, I finding an Engagement to speak, said, "My Mind is often led to consider the Purity of the divine Being, and the Justice of his Judgments; and herein my Soul is covered with Awfulness: I cannot omit to hint of some Cases, where People have not been treated with the Purity of Justice, and the Event hath been lamentable: Many Slaves on this Continent are oppressed, and their Cries have reached the Ears of the Most High. Such are the Purity and Certainty of his Judgments, that he cannot be partial in our Favour. In infinite Love and Goodness, he hath opened our Understandings, from one Time to another, concerning our Duty towards this People; and it is not a Time for Delay. Should we now be sensible of what he requires of us, and, through a Respect to the private Interest of some Persons, or through a Regard to some Friendships which do not stand on an immutable Foundation, neglect to do our Duty in Firmness and Con-

stancy, still waiting for some extraordinary Means to bring about their Deliverance, it may be by terrible Things in Righteousness God may answer us in this Matter."

Many faithful Brethren laboured with great Firmness; and the Love of Truth, in a good Degree, prevailed. Several Friends, who had Negroes, expressed their Desire that a Rule might be made, to deal with such Friends as Offenders who bought Slaves in future: To this it was answered, that the Root of this Evil would never be effectually struck at, until a thorough Search was made into the Circumstances of such Friends as kept Negroes, with respect to the Righteousness of their Motives in keeping them, that impartial Justice might be administered throughout. Several Friends expressed their Desire, that a Visit might be made to such Friends as kept Slaves; and many Friends said, that they believed Liberty was the Negroes Right: To which, at length, no Opposition was made publicly. A Minute was made more full on that Subject than any heretofore; and the Names of several Friends entered, who were free to join in a Visit to such as kept Slaves.

## CONSIDERATIONS ON PURE WISDOM AND HUMAN POLICY

To HAVE our Trust settled in the Lord, and not to seek after, nor desire outward Treasures, any further than his Holy Spirit leads us therein, is a happy State, as saith the Prophet, *Blessed is the Man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose Hope the Lord is.*

Pure Wisdom leads People into Lowliness of Mind, in which they learn Resignation to the Divine Will, and Contentment in suffering for his Cause, when they cannot keep a clear Conscience without suffering.

In this pure Wisdom the Mind is attentive to the Root, and original Spring of Motions and Desires; and as we know *the Lord to be our Refuge*, and find no Safety but in humbly walking before him, we feel an Holy Engagement, that every Desire which leads therefrom may be brought to Judgment.

While we proceed in this precious Way, and find ardent Longings for a full Deliverance from everything which defiles, all Prospects of Gain, that are not consistent with the Wisdom from above, are considered as Snares, and an inward Concern is felt, that we may live under the Cross, and faithfully attend to that Holy Spirit, which is sufficient to preserve out of them.

When I have considered that Saying of Christ, *Mat. vi. 19, Lay not up for yourselves Treasures upon Earth*, his Omnipotence hath often occurred to my Mind.

While we believe that he is every where present with his People, and that perfect Goodness, Wisdom and Power are united in him, how comfortable is the Consideration.

Our Wants may be great, but his Power is

greater. We may be oppressed and despised, but he is able to turn our patient Sufferings into Profit to ourselves, and to the Advancement of his Work on Earth. His People, who feel the Power of his Cross, to crucify all that is selfish in them, who are engaged in outward Concerns, from a Convincement that it is their Duty, and resign themselves, and their Treasures, to him; these feel that it is dangerous to give way to that in us, which craves Riches and Greatness in this World.

As the Heart truly contrite, earnestly desires *to know Christ, and the Fellowship of his Sufferings*, Phil. iii. 10. so far as the Lord for gracious Ends may lead into them; as such feel that it is their Interest to put their Trust in God, and to seek no Gain but that which he, by his Holy Spirit, leads into; so, on the contrary, they who do not reverently wait for this Divine Teacher, and are not humbly concerned, according to their Measure, *to fill up that which is behind of the Afflictions of Christ*, Col. i. 24. in patiently suffering for the promoting Righteousness in the Earth; but have an Eye toward the Power of Men, and the outward Advantage of Wealth, these are often attentive to those Employments which appear profitable, even though the Gains arise from such Trade and Business which proceeds from the Workings of that Spirit, which is estranged from the self-denying Life of an humble contrite *Christian*.

While I write on this Subject, I feel my Mind tenderly affected toward those honestly disposed People, who have been brought up in Employments attended with those Difficulties.

To such I may say, in the feeling of our Heavenly Father's Love, and number myself with you, O that our Eyes may be single to the Lord! May we reverently wait on him for Strength, to lay aside all unnecessary Expence of every Kind, and learn Contentment, in a plain simple Life.

May we, in Lowliness, submit to the Leadings of his Spirit, and enter upon any outward Employ which he graciously points out to us, and then whatever Difficulties arise, in Consequence of our Faithfulness, I trust they will work for our Good.

Small Treasure to a resigned Mind is suffi-

cient. How happy is it to be content with a little, to live in Humility, and feel that in us, which breathes out this Language, Abba! Father.

If that, called the Wisdom of this World, had no Resemblance of true Wisdom, the Name of Wisdom, I suppose, had not been given to it.

As wasting outward Substance, to gratify vain Desires, on one hand; so Slothfulness and Neglect, on the other, do often involve Men and their Families in Trouble, and reduce them to Want and Distress; to shun both these opposite Vices, is good in itself, and hath a Resemblance of Wisdom; but while People thus provident, have it principally in View to get Riches, and Power, and the Friendship of this World, and do not humbly wait for the Spirit of Truth to lead them into Purity; these, through an anxious Care to obtain the End desired, reach forth for Gain in worldly Wisdom, and, in regard to their inward State, fall into divers Temptations and Snares. And though such may think of applying Wealth to good Purposes, and to use their Power to prevent Oppression, yet Wealth and Power is often applied otherwise, nor can we depart from the Leadings of our Holy Shepherd, without going into Confusion.

Great Wealth is frequently attended with Power, which nothing but Divine Love can qualify the Mind to use rightly; and as to the Humility, and Uprightness of our Children after us, how great is the Uncertainty! If, in acquiring Wealth, we take hold on the Wisdom which is from beneath, and depart from the Leadings of Truth, and Example our Children herein, we have great Cause to apprehend, that Wealth may be a Snare to them; and prove an Injury to others, over whom their Wealth may give them Power.

To be redeemed from that Wisdom which is from beneath, and walk in the Light of the Lord, is a precious Situation; thus his People are brought to put their Trust in him; and in this humble Confidence in his Wisdom, Goodness and Power, the Righteous find a Refuge in Adversities, superior to the greatest outward Helps, and a Comfort more certain than any worldly Advantages can afford.

ON SILENT WORSHIP<sup>1</sup>

WORSHIP in Silence hath often been refreshing to my Mind, and a Care attends me that a young Generation may feel the Nature of this Worship.

Great Expence ariseth in Relation to that which is call'd Divine Worship.

A considerable Part of this Expence is applied toward outward Greatness, and many poor People in raising of Tithe, labour in supporting Customs contrary to the Simplicity that there is in Christ, toward whom my Mind hath often been moved with Pity.

In pure silent Worship, we dwell under the Holy Anointing, and feel Christ to be our Shepherd.

Here the best of Teachers ministers to the several Conditions of his Flock, and the Soul receives immediately from the Divine Fountain, that with which it is nourished.

As I have travelled at Times where those of other Societies have attended our Meetings, and have perceiv'd how little some of them knew of the Nature of silent Worship; I have felt tender Desires in my Heart that we who often sit silent in our Meetings, may live answerable to the Nature of an inward Fellowship with God, that no Stumbling-block through us, may be laid in their Way.

Such is the Load of unnecessary Expence which lieth on that which is called Divine Service in many Places, and so much are the Minds of many People employ'd in outward Forms and Ceremonies, that the opening of an inward silent Worship in this Nation to me hath appeared to be a precious Opening.

Within the last four Hundred Years, many

pious People have been deeply exercised in Soul on Account of the Superstition which prevailed amongst the professed Followers of Christ, and in support of their Testimony against oppressive Idolatry, some in several Ages have finished their Course in the Flames.

It appears by the History of the Reformation, that through the Faithfulness of the Martyrs, the Understandings of many have been opened, and the Minds of People, from Age to Age, been more and more prepared for a real spiritual Worship.

My Mind is often affected with a Sense of the Condition of those People who in different Ages have been meek and patient, following Christ through great Afflictions: And while I behold the several Steps, of Reformation, and that Clearness, to which through Divine Goodness, it hath been brought by our Ancestors; I feel tender Desires that we who sometimes meet in Silence, may never by our Conduct lay Stumbling-blocks in the Way of others, and hinder the Progress of the Reformation in the World.

It was a Complaint against some who were called the Lord's People, that they brought polluted Bread to his Altar, and said the Table of the Lord was contemptible.

In real silent Worship the Soul feeds on that which is Divine; but we cannot partake of the Table of the Lord, and that Table which is prepared by the God of this World.

If Christ is our Shepherd, and feedeth us, and we are faithful in following him, our Lives will have an inviting Language, and the Table of the Lord will not be polluted.

<sup>1</sup> Being chapter III of *Remarks on Sundry Subjects*.

## CONSIDERATIONS ON THE TRUE HARMONY OF MANKIND<sup>1</sup>

### CHAPTER I

#### ON SERVING THE LORD IN OUR OUTWARD EMPLOYMENTS

UNDER the humbling Dispensations of the Father of Mercies, I have felt an inward Labour for the Good of my Fellow.Creatures, and a Concern that the Holy Spirit, which alone can restore Mankind to a State of true Harmony, may with Singleness of Heart be waited for and followed.

I trust there are many under that Visitation, which if faithfully attended to, will make them quick of Understanding in the Fear of the Lord, and qualify with Firmness to be true Patterns of the *Christian* Life, who in Living and Walking may hold forth an Invitation to others, to come out of the Entanglements of the Spirit of this World.

And that which I feel first to express is, a Care for those who are in Circumstances, which appear difficult, with respect to supporting their Families in a Way answerable to pure Wisdom, that they may not be discouraged, but remember that in humbly obeying the Leadings of Christ, he owneth us as his Friends, *Ye are my Friends if ye do whatsoever I command you*; and to be a Friend to Christ, is to be united to him, who hath all Power in Heaven and in Earth; and though a Woman may forget her sucking Child, yet will he not forget his faithful Ones.

The Condition of many who dwell in Cities hath often affected me with a Brotherly Sympathy, attended with a Desire that Resignation may be laboured for; and where the Holy Leader directeth to a Country Life, or some Change of Employ, he may be faithfully followed; for, under the refining Hand of the Lord, I have seen that the Inhabitants of some Cities are greatly increased through some Branches of Business which the Holy Spirit doth not lead into, and that being entangled in these Things, tends to bring a

Cloud over the Minds of People convinced of the Leadings of this Holy Leader, and obstructs the coming of the Kingdom of Christ on Earth as it is in Heaven.

Now if we indulge a Desire to imitate our Neighbours in those Things which harmonise not with the true *Christian* Walking, these Entanglements may hold fast to us, and some, who in an awakening Time, feel tender Scruples, with respect to their Manner of Life, may look on the Example of others more noted in the Church, who yet may not be refined from every Degree of Dross; and by looking on these Examples, and desiring to support their Families in a Way pleasant to the natural Mind, there may be Danger of the Worldly Wisdom gaining Strength in them, and of their Departure from that pure Feeling of Truth, which if faithfully attended to, would teach Contentment in the Divine Will, even in a very low Estate.

One formerly speaking on the Profitableness of true Humility saith, "He that troubles not himself with anxious Thoughts for more than is necessary, lives little less than the Life of Angels, whilst by a Mind content with little, he imitates their want of nothing." *Cave's Prim. Christi.* p. 31.

"It is not enough," says *Tertullian*, "that a *Christian* be chaste and modest, but he must appear to be so: A Virtue of which he should have so great a Store, that it should flow from his Mind upon his Habit, and break from the Retirements of his Conscience, into the Superficies of his Life." Same Book, p. 43.

"The Garments we wear," says *Clemens*, "ought to be mean and frugal — that is true Simplicity of Habit, which takes away what is vain and superfluous, that the best and most solid Garment, which is the farthest from Curiosity." P. 49.

Though the Change from Day to Night, is by a Motion so gradual as scarcely to be perceived, yet when Night is come we behold it

<sup>1</sup> Being a portion of the work by the same title.

very different from the Day; and thus as People become wise in their own Eyes, and prudent in their own Sight, Customs rise up from the Spirit of this World, and spread by little, and little, till a Departure from the Simplicity that there is in Christ becomes as distinguishable as Light from Darkness, to such who are crucified to the World.

Our Holy Shepherd, to encourage his Flock in Firmness and Perseverance, reminds them of his Love for them; *As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my Love.* And in another Place graciously points out the Danger of departing therefrom, by going into unsuitable Employments; this he represents in the Similitude of Offence from that useful active Member, the Hand; and to fix the Instruction the deeper, names the right Hand; *If thy right Hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee* — If thou feelest Offence in thy Employment, humbly follow him who leads into all Truth, and is a strong and faithful Friend to those who are resigned to him.

Again, he points out those Things which appearing pleasant to the natural Mind, are not best for us, in the Similitude of Offence from the Eye; *If thy right Eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee.* To pluck out the Eye, or cut off the Hand, is attended with sharp Pain; and how precious is the Instruction which our Redeemer thus opens to us, that we may not faint under the most painful Trial, but put our Trust in him, even in him who sent an Angel to feed *Elijah* in the Wilderness; who fed a Multitude with a few Barley Loaves, and is now as attentive to the Wants of his People as ever.

The Prophet *Isaiah* represents the unrighteous Doings of the Israelites toward the Poor, as the Fruits of an effeminate Life, *As for my People, Children are their Oppressors, and Women rule over them: What mean ye, that ye beat my People to pieces, and grind the Faces of the Poor, saith the Lord God.* Then he mentions the Haughtiness of the Daughters of *Sion*, and enumerates many Ornaments, as Instances of their Vanity; to uphold which, the Poor were so hardly dealt with, that he sets forth their Poverty, their Leanness and Inability to help themselves, in the Similitude of a Man maimed by Violence, or beaten to pieces, and

forced to endure the painful Operation of having his Face gradually worn away in the manner of grinding.

And I may here add, that at Times, when I have felt true Love open my Heart towards my Fellow Creatures, and being engaged in weighty Conversation in the Cause of Righteousness, the Instructions I have received under these Exercises, in Regard to the true Use of the outward Gifts of God, have made deep and lasting Impressions on my Mind.

I have here beheld, how the Desire to provide Wealth, and to uphold a delicate Life, hath grievously entangled many, and been like Snares to their Offspring; and tho' some have been affected with a Sense of their Difficulties, and appeared desirous, at Times, to be helped out of them; yet for want of abiding under the humbling Power of Truth, they have continued in these Entanglements; for in remaining conformable to this World, and giving Way to a delicate Life, this expensive Way of living, in Parents, and in Children, hath called for a large Supply, and in answering this Call the Faces of the Poor have been ground away, and made thin through hard Dealing.

There is Balm, there is a Physician; and O what Longings do I feel! that we may embrace the Means appointed for our Healing, know that removed which now ministers Cause for the Cries of many People to ascend to Heaven against their Oppressors, and that we may see the true Harmony restored.

*Behold how good and how pleasant it is, for Brethren to dwell together in Unity.* The Nature of this Unity is thus opened by the Apostle; *If we walk in the Light, as Christ is in the Light, we shall have Fellowship one with another, and the Blood of Christ will cleanse us from all Sin.*

The Land may be polluted with innocent Blood, which like the Blood of *Abel* may cry to the Almighty; but those who walk in the Light, as Christ is in the Light, they know the Lamb of God, who taketh away Sin.

Walking is a Phrase frequently used in Scripture, to represent our Journey thro' Life, and appears to comprehend the various Affairs and Transactions properly relating to our being in this World.

Christ being the Light, dwells always in

the Light, and if our walking be thus, and in every Affair and Concern we faithfully follow this Divine Leader, he preserves from giving just Cause for any to quarrel with us: And where this Foundation is laid, and mutually kept to, by Families conversant with each other, the Way is open for those Comforts in Society, which our Heavenly Father intends as a Part of our Happiness in this World; and then we may experience the Goodness, and Pleasantness of dwelling together in Unity; but where Ways of Living take place, which tend to Oppression, and in the Pursuit of Wealth, People do that to others which they know would not be acceptable to themselves, either in laying on them unequitable Burdens; here a Fear lest that Measure should be meted to them, which they have measured to others, incites a Care to support that by Craft and cunning Devices which stands not on the firm Foundation of Righteousness: Thus the Harmony of Society is broken, and from hence Commotions and Wars do frequently arise in the World.

#### CHAPTER II

##### ON THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST

As MY Mind hath been brought into a Brotherly Feeling with the Poor, as to the Things of this Life, who are under Trials in regard to getting a Living in a Way answerable to the Purity of Truth; a Labour of Heart hath attended me, that their Way may not be made difficult through the Love of Money in those who are tried with plentiful Estates, but that they with Tenderness of Heart may sympathize with them.

It was the Saying of our blessed Redeemer, *Ye cannot serve God and Mammon*. There is a deep Feeling of the Way of Purity, a Way in which the Wisdom of the World hath no Part, but is opened by the Spirit of Truth, and is called *the Way of Holiness*; a Way in which the Traveller is employed in watching unto Prayer; and the outward Gain we get in this Journey is considered as a Trust committed to us, by him who formed and supports the World; and is the rightful Director of the Use and Application of the Product of it.

Now except the Mind be preserved chaste,

there is no Safety for us; but in an Estrangement from true Resignation, the Spirit of the World casts up a Way, in which Gain is many Times principally attended to, and in which there is a selfish Application of outward Treasures.

How agreeable to the true Harmony of Society, is that Exhortation of the Apostle? *Look not every Man on his own Things, but every Man also on the Things of others. Let this Mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.*

#### CHAPTER III

##### ON MERCHANTIZING

WHERE the Treasures of pure Love are opened, and we obediently follow him who is the Light of Life, the Mind becomes chaste; and a Care is felt, that the Unction from the Holy One may be our Leader in every Undertaking.

In being crucified to the World, broken off from that Friendship which is Enmity with God, and dead to the Customs and Fashions which have not their Foundation in the Truth; the Way is prepared to Lowliness in outward Living, and to a Disentanglement from those Snares which attends the Love of Money, and where the faithful Friends of Christ are so situated that Merchandize appears to be their Duty, they feel a Restraint from proceeding farther than he owns their Proceeding; being convinced that *we are not our own, but are bought with a Price, that none of us may live to ourselves, but to him who died for us*, 2 Cor. v. 15. Thus they are taught, not only to keep to a moderate Advance and Uprightness in their Dealings; but to consider the Tendency of their Proceeding; to do nothing which they know would operate against the Cause of universal Righteousness; and to keep continually in View the Spreading of the peaceable Kingdom of Christ amongst Mankind.

#### CHAPTER IV

##### ON DIVINE ADMONITIONS

SUCH are the Perfections of our Heavenly Father, that in all the Dispensations of his Providence, it is our Duty, *in every Thing, to give Thanks*. Though from the first Settlement of this Part of *America*, he hath not ex-

tended his Judgments to the Degree of Famine, yet Worms at Times have come forth beyond numbering, and laid waste Fields of Grain and Grass, where they have appeared; another Kind, in great Multitudes, working out of Sight, in Grass Ground, have so eat the Roots, that the Surface, being loosened from the Soil beneath, might be taken off in great Sheets.

These Kind of devouring Creatures appearing seldom, and coming in such Multitudes, their Generation appears different from most other Reptiles, and by the Prophet were call'd *God's Army sent amongst the People*, Joel ii. 25.

There have been Tempests of Hail, which have very much destroyed the Grain where they extended. Through long Drought in Summer, Grain in some Places hath been less than half the usual Quantity;<sup>1</sup> and in the Continuance thereof, I have beheld with Attention, from Week to Week, how Dryness from the Top of the Earth, hath extended deeper and deeper, while the Corn and Plants have languished; and with Reverence my Mind hath been turned towards him, who being perfect in Goodness, in Wisdom and Power, doeth all Things right. And after long Drought, when the Sky hath grown dark with a Collection of Matter, and Clouds like Lakes of Water hung over our Heads, from whence the thirsty Land hath been soaked; I have at Times, with Awfulness, beheld the vehement Operation of Lightning, made sometimes to accompany these Blessings, as a Messenger from him who created all Things, to remind us of our Duty in a right Use of those Benefits, and give striking Admonitions, that we do not misapply those Gifts, in which an Almighty Power is exerted, in bestowing them upon us.

When I have considered that many of our Fellow Creatures suffer much in some Places, for want of the Necessaries of Life, whilst those who rule over them are too much given to Luxury, and divers Vanities; and behold the apparent Deviation from pure Wisdom amongst us, in the Use of the outward Gifts of God; those Marks of Famine have appeared

like humbling Admonitions from him, that we might be instructed by gentle Chastisements, and might seriously consider our Ways; remembering that the outward Supply of Life is a Gift from our Heavenly Father, and no more venture to use, or apply his Gifts, in a Way contrary to pure Wisdom.

Should we continue to reject those merciful Admonitions, and use his Gifts at Home, contrary to the gracious Design of the Giver, or send them Abroad in a Way of Trade, which the Spirit of Truth doth not lead into; and should he whose Eyes are upon all our Ways, extend his Chastisements so far as to reduce us to much greater Distress than hath yet been felt by these Provinces; with what sorrow of Heart might we meditate on that Subject, *Hast thou not procured this unto thyself, in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, when he led thee by the Way? Thine own Wickedness shall correct thee, and thy Backslidings shall reprove thee; know therefore, and see that it is an evil Thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my Fear is not in thee, saith the Lord of Hosts*, Jer. ii. 17, 19.

My Mind hath often been affected with Sorrow, in beholding a wrong Application of the Gifts of our Heavenly Father; and those Expressions concerning the Defilement of the Earth have been opened to my Understanding; *The Earth was corrupt before God, and the Earth was filled with Violence*, Gen. vi. II. Again, Isaiah xxiv. 5. *The Earth also is defiled under the Inhabitants thereof*.

The Earth being the Work of a Divine Power, may not as such be accounted unclean; but when Violence is committed thereon, and the Channel of Righteousness so obstructed, that *in our Skirts are found the Blood of the Souls of poor Innocents; not by a secret Search, but upon all these*,<sup>2</sup> Jer. ii. 34.

When Blood shed unrighteously remains unatoned for, and the Inhabitants are not effectually purged from it, when they do not wash their Hands in Innocency, as was figured in the Law, in the Case of one being found slain; but seek for Gain arising from Scenes of Violence and Oppression, here the Land is polluted with Blood, *Deut. xxi. 6*.

<sup>1</sup> When Crops fail, I often feel a tender Care that the Case of poor Tenants may be mercifully considered.

<sup>2</sup> See a *Caution and Warning to Great Britain and her Colonies*, p. 31.

Moreover, when the Earth is planted and tilled, and the Fruits brought forth are applied to support unrighteous Purposes; here the gracious Design of infinite Goodness, in these his Gifts being perverted, the Earth is defiled;

and the Complaint formerly uttered becomes applicable; *Thou hast made me to serve with thy Sins; thou hast wearied me with thine Iniquities,* Isaiah xliii. 24.



## PART TWO

### *The Period of the American Enlightenment*

---

By 1750 three types of world view were contending for mastery on the American scene: the theocratic-democratic ideal of the dissident churches, especially in New England; the agrarian-cosmopolitan individualism linked with deism, dominant in the South; and a pioneer-nationalist-capitalist ideal centered principally in the cities of the eastern seaboard and in the Middle Colonies. In the second half of the century there was a rapid growth of (1) utilitarian thinking and its natural correlative, free-willism, (2) the separation of civil and church authorities and moralities, and (3) the emergence of new methods of government and the intensification of regional and class conflict.<sup>1</sup>

The spreading of ideas from the Enlightenment in Europe, especially from English Deism, influenced American philosophy along the lines of its natural "practical" development. Americans were reading Milton, Clarke, Sidney, Shaftesbury, Hartley, Collins, Toland, Tindal, Wollaston, Hutcheson, Hume, Adam Smith, and Ferguson. Reliance on human reason, on pragmatic or utilitarian foundations for the old puritan virtues, surrender of belief in miracles, and reliance on civic virtues and institutions, especially education, become the order of the day among men like Franklin, Paine, Allen, Priestley, Jefferson, Rush, Cooper, and Palmer.<sup>2</sup>

Viewed superficially, the Deists would seem to have forsaken Augustine's City of God and the Holy Commonwealth of the Puritans, and to have turned to a new philosophy of man and society. Actually, however, to borrow the phrase of Carl Becker,<sup>3</sup> they only demolished the Heavenly City of Augustine to rebuild it with more up-to-date materials. Their great shibboleths were Reason and Nature. Later, when Reason did not build the Utopia which they had envisaged they forsook her and clinging to their dream employed the new instruments of Romanticism.

Deists like Benjamin Franklin were really quite conventional in theology: "I was never without some religious principles. I never doubted, for instance, [1] the existence of the Deity; [2] that he made the world, and governed it by his Providence; [3] that the most acceptable service of God was the doing good to man; [4] that our souls are immortal; and [5] that all crime will be punished, and virtue rewarded, either here or here-

<sup>1</sup> See G. Müller, "Deismus und Aufklärung," *Amerikanische Philosophie*, s. 40-78. 1936.

<sup>2</sup> The selection in this Part on the Deistical Society of New York summarizes the chief emphases of the American Enlightenment. Palmer was the leader of the society.

<sup>3</sup> See Carl Becker, *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers*, p. 31.

after." The arrogant offensive of men like Paine tended to obscure this basic conservatism.

Yet, it must be admitted that in an age when the Calvinistic doctrine of election was associated with ecclesiastic class rule, when total depravity ran at cross purposes with pioneer optimism, and when God's absolute sovereignty opposed individual initiative, in such an age the Deistic attack on Calvinism was a stroke for political emancipation, and, as it turned out, for the emancipation of the rising commercial class. Parrington stresses the fact that at the European capitols Franklin was the symbol of the triumph of a rising class and a new social ideal. He represented rationalism, emancipation from ecclesiastical and archaic political authority, concern for social justice, democracy, and optimism for posterity. What is true of Franklin holds for what was most fruitful in all the so-called American Deists.

The proprietary, aristocratic, and established classes of colonial America gave their grudging acknowledgments to Benjamin Franklin only after the seal of European favor had been bestowed upon him. His *Autobiography* tells the story of the rise of this self-made democrat, a man singularly free of provincial customs and prejudices. He was a delightful wit, a successful tradesman, a practical moralist, an experimenter in natural phenomena, an able ambassador who charmed the royal circles of Europe, an aggressive agrarian, and an early repudiator of mercantilism in favor of the rising school of *laissez-faire*. The life of Franklin embodies both the ideals and the ambitions of countless Americans of his day and of the century following. Versatility, enterprise, pragmatism, social-mindedness, reason, and work are the marks of his successful climb from the narrow confines of Boston to cosmopolitan fame. Even more than his writings, his life is a contribution to American philosophy.

Like Franklin, Jefferson made his contribution to American thought as a living symbol. He was the great statesman of democracy. The spirit of agrarianism clothed in physiocratic doctrine, the spirit of religious toleration, of the rights of the individual, and of higher education, are in him. Perhaps more than any other person he prepared the practical credo of the American dream: liberty, equality, mass well-being, opportunity, tolerance, education, classless democracy, peace, and progress. Out of the background of southern aristocracy he emerged to become a real liberal, representing not only latent American idealism but also the rights of man as proclaimed by the French Revolution.

Jefferson's intense and prolonged political and practical life prevented his making any systematic elaboration of his philosophical ideas. Intellectually he was immensely versatile. Among his friends were Priestley, Erasmus Darwin, and Watts. Attracted to the ideas of Epicurus and Gassendi, he reacted vigorously against Calvinism. He was sympathetic towards the views of Cabanis, d'Alembert, and Diderot. According to Jefferson happiness is the chief end of life, virtue its foundation, and utility the source of common sense; and the good man exhibits wisdom, self-reliance, discipline, high-mindedness, tolerance, and poise. His materialism did not embrace complete atheism and his love of the Epicurean sage did not exclude an affection for the teachings of Jesus about human relationships. He noted that reaction against authoritarian Catholicism in countries like France might result in atheism, but that in Protestant countries the more probable form of reaction would be some form of deism.

An elaboration of Jefferson's political thinking is irrelevant to the purposes of this volume, though his affinities to the Physiocrats and the "Natural Rights" thinkers should be noted. What he wished most to be remembered by was that he was the author of the Declaration of Independence and the Virginia laws for religious freedom, and the founder of the University of Virginia.

The case of Ethan Allen as a deist is instructive though not normative. Quite typically he said of himself that his sources for writing *Reason, the Only Oracle of Man* were the Bible and the dictionary. However, other sources are definitely traceable in the book. Schantz<sup>1</sup> summarizes the sources of Allen's thought as follows: "(1) the Arminian influences of the Great Awakening, felt mostly through his father; (2) Benjamin Stile's knowledge of Lockean Philosophy; (3) the British deism of Thomas Young; (4) the reaction against Calvinistic dogma common among many frontiersmen; (5) Allen's personal reaction against Edwards' sermons; (6) contacts with deistic British officers in the French and Indian War; and (7) contact with the radical ideas of the French *philosophes* through the followers of Lafayette in the Revolutionary War."

Ethan Allen's rationalism shows certain traits at variance with the common pattern of the American Enlightenment. He was more interested than was customary in the question of immortality. He held less tenaciously to the innate goodness of man. He relied more on intuitive certainty than upon sense data, natural law, and reason. He stressed less the worship of God through service to one's fellow men, because the fruits of religion are for him simply a moral individual life. Like most followers of the Newtonian system, however, he held that God does not interfere with the natural processes of the world. Even if there were revelation it would have to be mediated through the senses, for through them only can ideas get into the understanding. Reason is not only superior to revelation, it is man's only oracle. Allen found revelation unnecessary to prove God's existence because the cosmological argument suffices. He was also certain that man is the responsible cause of his actions.

Allen's book was not well received by the cultural leaders. It was condemned by such prominent persons as President Timothy Dwight of Yale, Ezra Stiles, President Sparks of Harvard, Lemuel Hopkins, and many others.

Like Allen, Thomas Paine also gave expression to militant deism. He uttered the aspirations of a new age. His tract, *Common Sense*, read during the Revolution by almost every family, caused his name to become a household word. In the *Rights of Man* he expressed ideas of freedom in a way which still thrills the hearts of the common man. The book was written at the opening of the French Revolution and brought him into the intimate circles of men like Danton and Condorcet.

Paine's religious creed was fully formulated in *The Age of Reason*. It rests on two fundamental propositions: (1) "I believe in one God, and no more; and I hope for happiness beyond this life." (2) "I believe the equality of man; and I believe that religious duties consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavoring to make our fellow creatures happy." For the rest of religious belief, from revelation to ecclesiastical institutions, he had caustic and sometimes crudely brutal commentary to offer. His thinking

<sup>1</sup> B. T. Schantz, "Ethan Allen's Religious Ideas," *Journal of Religion*, 18:183-217, April, 1938.

was not profound. Hatred of political despotism, contempt for church offices as refuges of ignorance and oppression, and lack of religious maturity, combined in Paine to effect an unreasonable *Age of Reason*. With no appreciation whatever for the object of his criticism, Paine failed to understand the meanings of the historical symbols and the mystical overtones of theological formulas. His criticisms of the Bible reveal a sophomoric literalness which suffers no opposition to its arrogance.

The book reflects, nevertheless, the broad humanitarian faith of the deist which made both the American and French Revolutions significant. Along with his greater contemporary, Thomas Jefferson, Paine is one of the builders of the "American Dream."

The religion of deism is the transition from the period of Edwards to the Unitarian transcendentalism of men like Parker. Indeed, much early Unitarianism is the product of the Enlightenment. Channing, whom we shall discuss in the next section, belongs perhaps as much to this period as to the later, but we shall follow the traditional order by including him among the transcendentalists.

The revolutionary activities of 1770-90 drew many men into political life who might otherwise have done superior theoretical work. Such a one was John Witherspoon. In spirit he is more akin to the theological Jonathan Edwards than to the politically minded Allen, Paine, and Franklin. Theoretically he combined Scottish Realism and theological conservatism. But his defense of "the right of personal conscience" was fated to throw him into the maelstrom of revolutionary political action where he, along with Thomas Paine, defended the rights of the common man.

The *Lectures on Moral Philosophy* which are included in this volume (in part) were assembled from student notes of Witherspoon's lectures. His other writings deal primarily with ecclesiastical and theological matters, though the secular theme in an essay on money deserves to be mentioned. The lectures follow both Aristotle and the Edinburgh manner of the day in combining ethics and politics (jurisprudence). The style of Witherspoon is rather prosaic, and the discussion leaves the impression of uninspired philosophy, though this may be due to the dependence of the text on student notes. However, for one who leaned so heavily in his theology on orthodox Calvinism, the appeal to human nature in his political writings is significant, showing as it does the influence of the Scottish school of Reid. Witherspoon writes: "It seems a point agreed upon, that the principles of duty and obligation must be drawn from the nature of man. That is to say, if we can discover how his Maker formed him, or for what he intended him, that certainly is what ought to be."

The concept of human nature presented in the book is neither novel nor original, but it is nevertheless representative of a great deal of thinking on both sides of the Atlantic. So also is his attack on Immaterialism (ostensibly the idealism of Berkeley) as "a wild and ridiculous attempt to unsettle the principles of common sense by metaphysical reasoning." In ethical theory Witherspoon adopts the notion of a moral sense which he equates with the Scriptural notion of conscience. The "rule of duty" he finds ultimately to be as "deeply founded as the nature of God himself, being a transcript of his moral excellence."

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

*I. Primary Sources:*

- ALLEN, ETHAN, *REASON, THE ONLY ORACLE OF MAN; OR A COMPENDIOUS SYSTEM OF NATURAL RELIGION*. Bennington, Vt., 1784. The second edition published by Wm. Sinclair, Philadelphia, 1836, is much abridged.
- FRANKLIN, BENJAMIN, *AUTOBIOGRAPHY*. (Many editions.)
- FRANKLIN, BENJAMIN, *THE WORKS OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN*. 10 vols. Edited, with biography, by Jared Sparks. Boston: 1840.
- FRANKLIN, BENJAMIN, *THE WRITINGS OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN*. 10 vols. Edited, with biography, by A. H. Smyth. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1905-07.
- JEFFERSON, THOMAS, *MEMOIR, CORRESPONDENCE AND MISCELLANIES FROM THE PAPERS OF THOMAS JEFFERSON*. 4 vols. Thomas Jefferson Randolph, editor; Charlottesville, Va., 1829.
- JEFFERSON, THOMAS, *THE WRITINGS OF THOMAS JEFFERSON*. 20 vols. A. L. Bergh, editor; Washington, D.C.: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1903.
- JEFFERSON, THOMAS, *THE WRITINGS OF THOMAS JEFFERSON*. 10 vols. Paul L. Ford, editor; New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1892-99.
- PAINE, THOMAS, *THE WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE*. 4 vols. M. D. Conway, editor; New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1894-96.
- PAINE, THOMAS, *THE THEOLOGICAL WORKS OF THOMAS PAINE*. Boston: J. P. Mendum, 1859.
- THE PRINCIPAL WRITINGS OF PAINE:
- COMMON SENSE, 1776.
- THE CRISIS, 1776.
- THE RIGHTS OF MAN, 1791-92.
- THE AGE OF REASON, 1793-95.
- WITHERSPOON, JOHN, *LECTURES ON MORAL PHILOSOPHY*. V. L. Collins, editor; under the sponsorship of the American Philosophical Association. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1912.

*II. Secondary Sources:*

- DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN BIOGRAPHY. Allen, Paine, Palmer, Franklin, Jefferson, and Witherspoon.
- BECKER, CARL L., *THE HEAVENLY CITY OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY PHILOSOPHERS*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932.
- BEST, M. A., *THOMAS PAINE, PROPHET AND MARTYR OF DEMOCRACY*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1927.
- CHINARD, G., *THOMAS JEFFERSON*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1929.
- KOCH, G. A., *REPUBLICAN RELIGION: THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION AND THE CULT OF REASON*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1933.
- MÜLLER, G. E., *AMERIKANISCHE PHILOSOPHIE*, s. 40-78.
- PARRINGTON, V. L., *MAIN CURRENTS IN AMERICAN THOUGHT*, vol. I, 164-78, 267-356.
- RILEY, I. W., *AMERICAN THOUGHT*. Chapter III.
- SCHANTZ, B. T., "ETHAN ALLEN'S RELIGIOUS IDEAS," *JOURNAL OF RELIGION*, 18:183-217, April, 1938.
- SCHNEIDER, H. W., "THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN'S MORAL PHILOSOPHY," *STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF IDEAS*, vol. III. New York: Columbia University Press, 1925.
- TOWNSEND, H. G., *PHILOSOPHICAL IDEAS IN THE UNITED STATES*. Chapter V.
- VAN DOREN, CARL, *BENJAMIN FRANKLIN*. New York: Viking Press, 1938.
- WILTSE, C. M., *THE JEFFERSONIAN TRADITION IN AMERICAN DEMOCRACY*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1935.



## *Benjamin Franklin*

(1706-1790)

FRANKLIN had an "amazing capacity for assimilating experience without being warped or discolored by it." From the provincial circles of Boston and Philadelphia he emerged finally as a famous national and cosmopolitan figure. This is a familiar story. Less well-known is the fact that while working at Palmer's printing house he set up Wollaston's *The Religion of Nature Delineated* (1725), and was led to write a refutation in which he presented the current theory of necessity. Later on he pragmatically regretted this youthful essay, *A Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity, Pleasure and Pain*, and thought it more useful to believe in God and to infer that "though certain actions might not be bad *because* they were forbidden... yet probably those actions might be forbidden because they were bad." At the age of twenty-two he drafted the "Articles of Belief and Acts of Religion" included here. Franklin is essentially utilitarian, as his system of moral perfection described in the *Autobiography* shows. The passion for moral improvement and practical achievement, exemplified in his "Advice to a Young Tradesman," found expression in a long life devoted to social betterment. He dreamed of a period of leisure devoted to the pursuit of philosophical studies, but this never materialized. Unlike contemporary French and American champions of the Enlightenment his religious philosophy is not of the corrosive variety. His remonstrance to Thomas Paine shows his basic conservatism.

ARTICLES OF BELIEF AND ACTS OF RELIGION<sup>\*</sup>

## PART FIRST

'Here will I hold. If there's a power above us,  
(And that there is, all nature cries aloud,  
Through all her works,) He must delight in virtue;  
And that which he delights in must be happy.'

ADDISON's *Cato*

## FIRST PRINCIPLES

I BELIEVE there is one supreme, most perfect Being, author and father of the gods themselves.

For I believe that man is not the most perfect being but one, but rather that there are many degrees of beings superior to him.

Also, when I stretch my imagination through and beyond our system of planets, beyond the visible fixed stars themselves, into that space that is every way infinite, and conceive it filled with suns like ours, each with a chorus of worlds forever moving round him; then this little ball on which we move, seems, even in my narrow imagination, to be almost nothing, and myself less than nothing, and of no sort of consequence.

When I think thus, I imagine it great vanity in me to suppose that the *Supremely Perfect* does in the least regard such an inconsiderable nothing as man; more especially, since it is impossible for me to have any clear idea of that which is infinite and incomprehensible, I cannot conceive otherwise, than that he *the Infinite Father* expects or requires no worship or praise from us, but that he is even infinitely above it.

But, since there is in all men something like a natural principle, which inclines them to DEVOTION, or the worship of some unseen power;

And since men are endued with reason superior to all other animals, that we are in our world acquainted with;

Therefore I think it seems required of me,

and my duty as a man, to pay divine regards to SOMETHING.

I conceive, then, that the INFINITE has created many beings or gods, vastly superior to man, who can better conceive his perfections than we, and return him a more rational and glorious praise; as, among men, the praise of the ignorant or of children is not regarded by the ingenious painter or architect, who is rather honored and pleased with the approbation of wise men and artists.

It may be these created gods are immortal, or it may be, that, after many ages, they are changed, and others supply their places.

Howbeit, I conceive that each of these is exceeding wise and good, and very powerful, and that each has made for himself one glorious sun, attended with a beautiful and admirable system of planets.

It is that particular wise and good God, who is the author and owner of our system, that I propose for the object of my praise and adoration.

For I conceive that he has in himself some of those passions he has planted in us; and that, since he has given us reason whereby we are capable of observing his wisdom in the creation, he is not above caring for us, being pleased with our praise, and offended when we slight him, or neglect his glory.

I conceive, for many reasons, that he is a *good Being*; and, as I should be happy to have so wise, good, and powerful a Being my friend, let me consider in what manner I shall make myself most acceptable to him.

<sup>\*</sup> This paper bears the date of November 20, 1728, when the author was twenty-two years old. It purports to be the First Part; but the continuation has never been published. — Editor, Jared Sparks. (The above selection is taken from Jared Sparks, ed., *The Works of Benjamin Franklin*, 10 vols., Boston, 1840. See II, 1-3.)



Next to the praise resulting from and due to his wisdom, I believe he is pleased and delights in the happiness of those he has created; and, since without virtue a man can have no happiness in this world, I firmly believe he delights to see me virtuous, because he is pleased when he sees me happy.

And since he has created many things, which seem purely designed for the delight of man, I believe he is not offended, when he sees his children solace themselves in any manner of pleasant exercises and innocent

delights; and I think no pleasure innocent, that is to man hurtful.

I *love* him therefore for his goodness, and I *adore* him for his wisdom.

Let me not fail, then, to praise my God continually, for it is his due, and it is all I can return for his many favors and great goodness to me; and let me resolve to be virtuous, that I may be happy, that I may please him, who is delighted to see me happy. Amen!

## ADVICE TO A YOUNG TRADESMAN<sup>1</sup>

Written in the Year 1748

TO MY FRIEND, A.B.

As you have desired it of me, I write the following hints, which have been of service to me, and may, if observed, be so to you.

Remember, that *time* is money. He that can earn ten shillings a day by his labor, and goes abroad, or sits idle, one half of that day, though he spends but sixpence during his diversion or idleness, ought not to reckon *that* the only expense; he has really spent, or rather thrown away, five shillings besides.

Remember, that *credit* is money. If a man lets his money lie in my hands after it is due, he gives me the interest, or so much as I can make of it during that time. This amounts to a considerable sum where a man has good and large credit, and makes good use of it.

Remember, that money is of the prolific, generating nature. Money can beget money, and its offspring can beget more, and so on. Five shillings turned is six, turned again it is seven and three-pence, and so on till it becomes an hundred pounds. The more there is of it, the more it produces every turning, so that the profits rise quicker and quicker. He that kills a breeding sow destroys all her offspring to the thousandth generation. He that murders a crown destroys all that it might have produced, even scores of pounds.

Remember, that six pounds a year is but a

groat a day. For this little sum (which may be daily wasted either in time or expense unperceived) a man of credit may, on his own security, have the constant possession and use of an hundred pounds. So much in stock, briskly turned by an industrious man, produces great advantage.

Remember this saying, *The good paymaster is lord of another man's purse*. He that is known to pay punctually and exactly to the time he promises, may at any time, and on any occasion, raise all the money his friends can spare. This is sometimes of great use. After industry and frugality, nothing contributes more to the raising of a young man in the world than punctuality and justice in all his dealings; therefore never keep borrowed money an hour beyond the time you promised, lest a disappointment shut up your friend's purse forever.

The most trifling actions that affect a man's credit are to be regarded. The sound of your hammer at five in the morning, or nine at night, heard by a creditor, makes him easy six months longer; but, if he sees you at a billiard-table, or hears your voice at a tavern, when you should be at work, he sends for his money the next day; demands it, before he can receive it, in a lump.

It shows, besides, that you are mindful of

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, II, 87-89.

what you owe; it makes you appear a careful as well as an honest man, and that still increases your credit.

Beware of thinking all your own that you possess, and of living accordingly. It is a mistake that many people who have credit fall into. To prevent this, keep an exact account for some time, both of your expenses and your income. If you take the pains at first to mention particulars, it will have this good effect; you will discover how wonderfully small, trifling expenses mount up to large sums, and will discern what might have been, and may for the future be saved, without occasioning any great inconvenience.

In short, the way to wealth, if you desire it, is as plain as the way to market. It depends chiefly on two words, *industry* and *frugality*; that is, waste neither *time* nor *money*, but make the best use of both. Without industry and frugality nothing will do, and with them everything. He that gets all he can honestly, and saves all he gets (necessary expenses excepted), will certainly become *rich*, if that Being who governs the world, to whom all should look for a blessing on their honest endeavors, doth not, in his wise Providence, otherwise determine.

AN OLD TRADESMAN

## TO THOMAS PAINE<sup>1</sup>

(Dissuading him from Publishing a Work of an Irreligious Tendency)

(Date uncertain)

DEAR SIR,

I have read your manuscript with some attention. By the argument it contains against a particular Providence, though you allow a general Providence, you strike at the foundations of all religion. For without the belief of a Providence, that takes cognizance of, guards, and guides, and may favor particular persons, there is no motive to worship a Deity, to fear his displeasure, or to pray for his protection. I will not enter into any discussion of your principles, though you seem to desire it. At present I shall only give you my opinion, that, though your reasonings are subtle, and may prevail with some readers, you will not succeed so as to change the general sentiments of mankind on that subject, and the consequence of printing this piece will be, a great deal of odium drawn upon yourself, mischief to you, and no benefit to others. He that spits against the wind, spits in his own face.

But, were you to succeed, do you imagine any good would be done by it? You yourself may find it easy to live a virtuous life,

without the assistance afforded by religion; you having a clear perception of the advantages of virtue, and the disadvantages of vice, and possessing a strength of resolution sufficient to enable you to resist common temptations. But think how great a portion of mankind consists of weak and ignorant men and women, and of inexperienced, inconsiderate youth of both sexes, who have need of the motives of religion to restrain them from vice, to support their virtue, and retain them in the practice of it till it becomes *habitual*, which is the great point for its security. And perhaps you are indebted to her originally, that is, to your religious education, for the habits of virtue upon which you now justly value yourself. You might easily display your excellent talents of reasoning upon a less hazardous subject, and thereby obtain a rank with our most distinguished authors. For among us it is not necessary, as among the Hottentots, that a youth, to be raised into the company of men, should prove his manhood by beating his mother.

I would advise you, therefore, not to attempt unchaining the tiger, but to burn this

<sup>1</sup> It is not certain that this letter was sent to Thomas Paine. *Op. cit.*, x, 281-82.

piece before it is seen by any other person; whereby you will save yourself a great deal of mortification by the enemies it may raise against you, and perhaps a good deal of regret and repentance. If men are so wicked *with*

*religion*, what would they be *if without it!* I intend this letter itself as a *proof* of my friendship, and therefore add no *professions* to it; but subscribe simply yours,

B. FRANKLIN

## TO EZRA STILES<sup>1</sup>

Philadelphia, 9 March, 1790

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

You desire to know something of my religion. It is the first time I have been questioned upon it. But I cannot take your curiosity amiss, and shall endeavor in a few words to gratify it. Here is my creed. I believe in one God, the creator of the universe. That he governs it by his Providence. That he ought to be worshiped. That the most acceptable service we render to him is doing good to his other children. That the soul of man is immortal, and will be treated with justice in another life respecting its conduct in this. These I take to be the fundamental points in all sound religion, and I regard them as you do in whatever sect I meet with them.

As to Jesus of Nazareth, my opinion of whom you particularly desire, I think his

system of morals and his religion, as he left them to us, the best the world ever saw or is like to see; but I apprehend it has received various corrupting changes, and I have, with most of the present Dissenters in England, some doubts as to his Divinity; though it is a question I do not dogmatize upon, having never studied it, and think it needless to busy myself with it now, when I expect soon an opportunity of knowing the truth with less trouble. I see no harm, however, in its being believed, if that belief has the good consequence, as probably it has, of making his doctrines more respected and more observed; especially as I do not perceive that the Supreme takes it amiss, by distinguishing the unbelievers in his government of the world with any particular marks of his displeasure.

B. FRANKLIN

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, x, 423-24.

# Thomas Jefferson

## (1743-1826)

THE facts of Jefferson's life are well known and need not be recited here. In early life he began to apply historical tests to the Bible and lost faith in conventional religion, but without questioning the established morality. Later in life he tried his hand at amateur higher-criticism in a study of the Four Gospels. He was generally regarded as a free-thinker and was under bitter and constant attack by the conservative clergy, especially in the period of his prominent public life. His spirit is reflected in his zeal for establishing religious freedom, and in effecting the abolishment of the professorships of Hebrew, theology, and ancient languages at William and Mary and the establishment of professorships of anatomy, medicine, law, and modern languages. It is fair to say that Jefferson loathed Calvinism, though he considered himself a disciple of Jesus' moral doctrines. He was friendly to the ideas of Epicurus and Epictetus. He was critical of Plato. Though he never prepared a systematic philosophical statement, he carried on a considerable correspondence on philosophical subjects. Doctor Benjamin Rush and John Adams exchanged opinions with him as the letters printed here illustrate.

### TO DOCTOR BENJAMIN RUSH<sup>1</sup>

Washington, April 21, 1803

DEAR SIR:

In some of the delightful conversations with you, in the evening of 1798-99, and which served as an anodyne to the afflictions of the crisis through which our country was then laboring, the Christian religion was sometimes our topic; and I then promised you, that one day or other, I would give you my views of it. They are the result of a life

of inquiry and reflection, and very different from that anti-Christian system imputed to me by those who know nothing of my opinions. To the corruptions of Christianity I am indeed opposed; but not to the genuine precepts of Jesus himself. I am a Christian, in the only sense in which he wished anyone to be; sincerely attached to his doctrines, in preference to all others; ascribing to himself every *human* excellence; and believing he

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Jefferson Randolph (ed.), *Memoir, Correspondence and Miscellaneous from the Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, III, 506-09. 1829.

never claimed any other. At the short intervals since these conversations, when I could justifiably abstract my mind from public affairs, the subject has been under my contemplation. But the more I considered it, the more it expanded beyond the measure of either my time or information. In the moment of my late departure from Monticello, I received from Doctor Priestley, his little treatise of "Socrates and Jesus compared." This being a section of the general view I had taken of the field, it became a subject of reflection while on the road, and unoccupied otherwise. The result was, to arrange in my mind a syllabus, or outline of such an estimate of the comparative merits of Christianity, as I wished to see executed by someone of more leisure and information for the task than myself. This I now send you, as the only discharge of my promise I can probably ever execute. And in confiding it to you, I know it will not be exposed to the malignant perversions of those who make every word from me a text for new misrepresentations and calumnies. I am moreover averse to the communication of my religious tenets to the public; because it would countenance the presumption of those who have endeavored to draw them before that tribunal, and to seduce public opinion to erect itself into that inquisition over the rights of conscience, which the laws have so justly proscribed. It behoves every man who values liberty of conscience for himself, to resist invasions of it in the case of others; or their case may, by change of circumstances, become his own. It behoves him, too, in his own case, to give no example of concession, betraying the common right of independent opinion, by answering questions of faith, which the laws have left between God and himself. Accept my affectionate salutations.

TH: JEFFERSON

SYLLABUS OF AN ESTIMATE OF THE MERIT OF  
THE DOCTRINES OF JESUS, COMPARED WITH  
THOSE OF OTHERS

In a comparative view of the Ethics of the enlightened nations of antiquity, of the Jews, and of Jesus, no notice should be taken of the corruptions of reason among the ancients, to wit, the idolatry and superstition of the vulgar, nor of the corruptions of Christianity by the learned among its professors.

Let a just view be taken of the moral principles inculcated by the most esteemed of the sects of ancient philosophy, or of their individuals; particularly Pythagoras, Socrates, Epicurus, Cicero, Epictetus, Seneca, Antoninus.

I. Philosophers. 1. Their precepts related chiefly to ourselves, and the government of those passions which, unrestrained, would disturb our tranquillity of mind.<sup>1</sup> In this branch of philosophy they were really great.

2. In developing our duties to others, they were short and defective. They embraced, indeed, the circles of kindred and friends, and inculcated patriotism, or the love of our country in the aggregate, as a primary obligation: towards our neighbors and countrymen they taught justice, but scarcely views them as within the circle of benevolence. Still less have they inculcated peace, charity and love to our fellow men, or embraced with benevolence the whole family of mankind.

II. Jews. 1. Their system was Deism; that is, the belief in one only God. But their ideas of him and of his attributes were degrading and injurious.

2. Their Ethics were not only imperfect, but often irreconcilable with the sound dictates of reason and morality, as they respect intercourse with those around us; and repulsive and antisocial, as respecting other nations. They needed reformation, therefore, in an eminent degree.

<sup>1</sup> To explain, I will exhibit the heads of Seneca's and Cicero's philosophical works, the most extensive of any we have received from the ancients. Of ten heads in Seneca, seven relate to ourselves, viz. *de ira*, *consolatio*, *de tranquillitate*, *de constantia sapientis*, *de otio sapientis*, *de vita beata*, *de brevitate vite*; two relate to others, *de clementia*, *de beneficiis*; and one relates to the government of the world, *de providentia*. Of eleven tracts of Cicero, five respect ourselves, viz. *de finibus*, *Tusculana*, *academica*, *paradoxa*, *de Senectute*; one, *de officiis*, relates partly to ourselves, partly to others, one, *de amicitia*, relates to others; and four are on different subjects, to wit, *de natura deorum*, *de divinatione*, *de fato*, and *somnium Scipionis*. (Jefferson's note.)

III. Jesus. In this state of things among the Jews, Jesus appeared. His parentage was obscure; his condition poor; his education null; his natural endowments great, his life correct and innocent; he was meek, benevolent, patient, firm, disinterested, and of the sublimest eloquence.

The disadvantages under which his doctrines appear are remarkable.

1. Like Socrates and Epictetus, he wrote nothing himself.

2. But he had not, like them, a Xenophon or an Arrian to write for him. I name not Plato, who only used the name of Socrates to cover the whimsies of his own brain. On the contrary, all the learned of his country, entrenched in its power and riches, were opposed to him, lest his labors should undermine their advantages; and the committing to writing his life and doctrines fell on unlettered and ignorant men; who wrote, too, from memory, and not till long after the transactions had passed.

3. According to the ordinary fate of those who attempt to enlighten and reform mankind, he fell an early victim to the jealousy and combination of the altar and the throne, at about thirty-three years of age, his reason having not yet attained the *maximum* of its energy, nor the course of his preaching, which was but of three years at most, presented occasions for developing a complete system of morals.

4. Hence the doctrines which he really delivered were defective as a whole, and fragments only of what he did deliver have come to us, mutilated, misstated, and often unintelligible.

5. They have been still more disfigured by the corruptions of schismatizing followers, who have found an interest in sophisticating and perverting the simple doctrines he taught, by engrafting on them the mysticisms of a Grecian sophist, frittering them into subtleties, and obscuring them with jargon, until

they have caused good men to reject the whole in disgust, and to view Jesus himself as an impostor.

Notwithstanding these disadvantages, a system of morals is presented to us, which, if filled up in the style and spirit of the rich fragments he left us, would be the most perfect and sublime that has ever been taught by man.

The question of his being a member of the God-head, or in direct communication with it, claimed for him by some of his followers, and denied by others, is foreign to the present view, which is merely an estimate of the intrinsic merit of his doctrines.

1. He corrected the Deism of the Jews, confirming them in their belief of one only God, and giving them juster notions of his attributes and government.

2. His moral doctrines, relating to kindred and friends, were more pure and perfect than those of the most correct of the philosophers, and greatly more so than those of the Jews; and they went far beyond both in inculcating universal philanthropy, not only to kindred and friends, to neighbors and countrymen, but to all mankind, gathering all into one family, under the bonds of love, charity, peace, common wants and common aids. A development of this head will evince the peculiar superiority of the system of Jesus over all others.

3. The precepts of philosophy, and of Hebrew code, laid hold of actions only. He pushed his scrutinies into the heart of man; erected his tribunal in the region of his thoughts, and purified the waters at the fountain head.

4. He taught, emphatically, the doctrines of a future state, which was either doubted, or disbelieved by the Jews; and wielded it with efficacy, as an important incentive, supplementary to the other motives to moral conduct.

TO JOHN ADAMS<sup>1</sup>

Monticello, April 11, 1823

DEAR SIR:

The wishes expressed in your last favor, that I may continue in life and health until I become a Calvinist, at least in his exclamation of, "mon Dieu! jusqu'a quand!" would make me immortal. I can never join Calvin in addressing *his God*. He was indeed an atheist, which I can never be; or rather his religion was daemonism. If ever man worshipped a false God, he did. The being described in his five points, is not the God whom you and I acknowledge and adore, the creator and benevolent governor of the world; but a daemon of malignant spirit. It would be more pardonable to believe in no God at all, than to blaspheme him by the atrocious attributes of Calvin. Indeed, I think that every Christian sect gives a great handle to atheism by their general dogma, that, without a revelation, there would not be sufficient proof of the being of a God. Now one sixth of mankind only are supposed to be Christians: the other five sixths then, who do not believe in the Jewish and Christian revelation, are without a knowledge of the existence of a God! This gives completely a *gain de cause* to the disciples of Ocellus, Timaeus, Spinoza, Diderot, and D'Holbach. The argument which they rest on as triumphant and unanswerable is, that in every hypothesis of cosmogony, you must admit an eternal pre-existence of something; and according to the rule of sound philosophy you are never to employ two principles to solve a difficulty when one will suffice. They say then, that it is more simple to believe at once in the eternal pre-existence of the world, as it is now going on, and may forever go on by the principle of reproduction which we see and witness, than to believe in the eternal pre-existence of an ulterior cause, or creator of the world, a being whom we see not and know not, of whose form, substance and mode, or place of existence, or of action,

no sense informs us, no power of the mind enables us to delineate or comprehend. On the contrary, I hold (without appeal to revelation) that when we take a view of the universe, in its parts, general or particular, it is impossible for the human mind not to perceive and feel a conviction of design, consummate skill, and indefinite power in every atom of its composition. The movements of the heavenly bodies, so exactly held in their course by the balance of centrifugal and centripetal forces; the structure of our earth itself, with its distribution of lands, waters and atmosphere; animal and vegetable bodies, examined in all their minutest particles; insects, mere atoms of life, yet as perfectly organized as man or mammoth; the mineral substances, their generation and uses; it is impossible, I say, for the human mind not to believe, that there is in all this, design, cause and effect, up to an ultimate cause, a fabricator of all things from matter and motion, their preserver and regulator while permitted to exist in their present forms, and their regenerator into new and other forms. We see, too, evident proofs of the necessity of a superintending power, to maintain the universe in its course and order. Stars, well known, have disappeared, new ones have come into view; comets, in their incalculable courses, may run foul of suns and planets, and require renovation under other laws, certain races of animals are become extinct; and were there no restoring power, all existences might extinguish successively, one by one, until all should be reduced to a shapeless chaos. So irresistible are these evidences of an intelligent and powerful agent, that, of the infinite numbers of men who have existed through all time, they have believed, in the proportion of a million at least to unit, in the hypothesis of an external pre-existence of a creator, rather than in that of a self-existent universe. Surely this unanimous sentiment renders this more probable, than that of the

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, iv, 363-64.

few in the other hypothesis. Some early Christians, indeed, have believed in the co-eternal pre-existence of both the creator and the world, without changing their relation

of cause and effect. That this was the opinion of St. Thomas, we are informed by Cardinal Toleta....

## TO JOHN ADAMS<sup>1</sup>

Monticello, July 5, 1814

DEAR SIR,

I am just returned from one of my long absences, having been at my other home for five weeks past. Having more leisure there than here for reading, I amused myself with reading seriously Plato's Republic. I am wrong, however, in calling it amusement, for it was the heaviest task-work I ever went through. I had occasionally before taken up some of his other works, but scarcely ever had patience to go through a whole dialogue. While wading through the whimsies, the puerilities, and unintelligible jargon of this work, I laid it down often to ask myself, how it could have been, that the world should have so long consented to give reputation to such nonsense as this? How the *soi-disant* Christian world, indeed, should have done it, is a piece of historical curiosity. But how could the Roman good sense do it? And particularly, how could Cicero bestow such eulogies on Plato? Although Cicero did not wield the dense logic of Demosthenes, yet he was able, learned, laborious, practised in the business of the world, and honest. He could not be the dupe of mere style, of which he was himself the first master in the world. With the moderns, I think, it is rather a matter of fashion and authority. Education is chiefly in the hands of persons who, from their profession, have an interest in the reputation and the dreams of Plato. They give the tone while at school, and few in their after years have occasion to revise their college opinions. But fashion and authority apart, and bringing Plato to the test of reason, take from him his sophisms, futilities and

incomprehensibilities, and what remains? In truth, he is one of the race of genuine sophists, who has escaped the oblivion of his brethren, first, by the elegance of his diction, but chiefly, by the adoption and incorporation of his whimsies into the body of artificial Christianity. His foggy mind is forever presenting the semblances of objects which, half seen through a mist, can be defined neither in form nor dimension. Yet this, which should have consigned him to early oblivion, really procured him immortality of fame and reverence. The Christian priesthood, finding the doctrines of Christ levelled to every understanding, and too plain to need explanation, saw in the mysticisms of Plato materials with which they might build up an artificial system, which might, from its indistinctness, admit everlasting controversy; give employment for their order, and introduce it to profit, power and pre-eminence. The doctrines which flowed from the lips of Jesus himself are within the comprehension of a child; but thousands of volumes have not yet explained the Platonisms engrafted on them: and for this obvious reason, that nonsense can never be explained. Their purposes, however, are answered. Plato is canonized: and it is now deemed as impious to question his merits as those of an Apostle of Jesus. He is peculiarly appealed to as an advocate of the immortality of the soul; and yet I will venture to say, that were there no better arguments than his in proof of it, not a man in the world would believe it. It is fortunate for us, that Platonic republicanism has not obtained the same favor as Platonic Christianity; or we should now have been all living, men, women and children, pell mell

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, IV, 241-43.



together, like the beasts of the field or forest. Yet "Plato is a great philosopher," said La Fontaine. But, says Fontenelle, "do you find his ideas very clear?" "Oh no! he is of an obscurity impenetrable." "Do you not find him full of contradictions?" "Certainly," replied La Fontaine, "he is but a sophist." Yet immediately after, he exclaims again, "Oh, Plato was a great philosopher." Socrates had reason, indeed, to complain of the misrepresentations of Plato; for in truth, his dialogues are libels on Socrates.

But why am I dosing you with these antediluvian topics? Because I am glad to have some one to whom they are familiar, and who will not receive them as if dropped from the moon. Our post-revolutionary youth are born under happier stars than you and I were. They acquire all learning in their mother's womb, and bring it into the world ready-made. The information of books is no longer necessary; and all knowledge which is not innate, is in contempt, or neglect at least. Every folly must run its round; and so, I suppose, must that of self-learning and self-sufficiency; of rejecting the knowledge acquired in past ages, and starting on the new ground of intuition. When sobered by experience, I hope our successors will turn their attention to the advantages of education. I mean of education on the broad scale, and not that of the petty *academics*, as they call

themselves, which are starting up in every neighborhood, and where one or two men, possessing Latin and sometimes Greek, a knowledge of the globes, and the first six books of Euclid, imagine and communicate this as the sum of science. They commit their pupils to the theatre of the world, with just taste enough of learning to be alienated from industrious pursuits, and not enough to do service in the ranks of science. We have some exceptions, indeed. I presented one to you lately, and we have some others. But the terms I use are general truths. I hope the necessity will, at length, be seen of establishing institutions here, as in Europe, where every branch of science, useful at this day, may be taught in its highest degree. Have you ever turned your thoughts to the plan of such an institution? I mean to a specification of the particular sciences of real use in human affairs, and how they might be so grouped as to require so many professors only, as might bring them within the views of a just but enlightened economy? I should be happy in a communication of your ideas on this problem, either loose or digested. But to avoid my being run away with by another subject, and adding to the length and ennui of the present letter, I will here present to Mrs. Adams and yourself, the assurance of my constant and sincere friendship and respect.

TH: JEFFERSON

## *Elihu Palmer*

(1764-1806)

ELIHU PALMER was born on his father's farm at Canterbury, Connecticut. He went to Dartmouth College, was elected to Phi Beta Kappa, and graduated in 1787. He studied divinity for a short time and then took up a pastorate in Newtown, Long Island. Being a free-thinker and quite outspoken, he evoked opposition and removed from Newtown to Philadelphia after about six months. Here he joined the Baptists, only to be expelled from his pulpit in 1791 because of heresy. With a few followers he joined a "Universal Society" which had recently been founded by John Fitch, the inventor of the steamboat. The society met with such public disapprobation that Palmer fled to escape violence. He then turned to law and was admitted to the bar in 1793. Shortly thereafter in a plague of yellow fever he lost his wife and was himself afflicted with blindness. He finally went to New York, where he became a preacher of deism and an organizer of deistic societies until his death.

Palmer's religious radicalism grew out of his democratic reaction to Calvinism. Like Rousseau he believed that the evil in the world lies not in man, but in corrupt institutions. If man would destroy despotism and superstition, education would do the rest. He envisioned in the American Revolution the coming of a new era for mankind. He helped organize the Deistical Society of the State of New York whose principles are a good summary of his republican religion.

### PRINCIPLES OF THE DEISTICAL SOCIETY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK<sup>1</sup>

PROPOSALS for forming a society for the promotion of moral science and the religion of nature — having in view the destruction of superstition and fanaticism — tending to the

development of the principles of a genuine natural morality — the practice of a pure and uncorrupted virtue — the cultivation of science and philosophy — the resurrection of

<sup>1</sup> Elihu Palmer, *Posthumous Pieces*, "Principles of the Deistical Society of the State of New York," pp. 10-11, quoted from Koch, *Republican Religion*, pp. 78-79.

reason, and the renovation of the intelligent world.

At a time when the political despotism of the earth is disappearing, and man is about to reclaim and enjoy the liberties of which for ages he has been deprived, it would be unpardonable to neglect the important concerns of intellectual and moral nature. The slavery of the mind has been the most destructive of all slavery; and the baneful effects of a dark and gloomy superstition have suppressed all the dignified efforts of the human understanding, and essentially circumscribed the sphere of intellectual energy. It is only by returning to the laws of nature, which man has so frequently abandoned, that happiness is to be acquired. And, although the efforts of a few individuals will be inadequate to the sudden establishment of moral and mental felicity; yet, they may lay the foundation on which a superstructure may be reared incalculably valuable to the welfare of future generations. To contribute to the accomplishment of an object so important, the members of this association do approve of the following fundamental principles:

1. That the universe proclaims the existence of one supreme Deity, worthy the adoration of intelligent beings.

2. That man is possessed of moral and intellectual faculties sufficient for the improvement of his nature, and the acquisition of happiness.

3. That the religion of nature is the only universal religion; that it grows out of the moral relations of intelligent beings, and that it stands connected with the progressive improvement and common welfare of the human race.

4. That it is essential to the true interest of man, that he love truth and practise virtue.

5. That vice is everywhere ruinous and destructive to the happiness of the individual and of society.

6. That a benevolent disposition, and beneficent actions, are fundamental duties of rational beings.

7. That a religion mingled with persecution and malice cannot be of divine origin.

8. That education and science are essential to the happiness of man.

9. That civil and religious liberty is equally essential to his true interests.

10. That there can be no human authority to which man ought to be amenable for his religious opinions.

11. That science and truth, virtue and happiness, are the great objects to which the activity and energy of the human faculties ought to be directed.

Every member admitted into this association shall deem it his duty, by every suitable method in his power, to promote the cause of nature and moral truth, in opposition to all schemes of superstition and fanaticism, claiming divine origin.

# Ethan Allen

(1737-1789)

THOUGH reared on a Connecticut farm, Ethan Allen was early driven, partly by necessity and partly by land speculation, to lead the wandering life of a frontiersman. He distinguished himself as a soldier in the French and Indian War, immortalized himself among the patriots of the Revolution as the leader of the "hardy mountaineers" of Vermont, and spent his last years defending Vermont against its neighbor states. In his philosophy Allen was uncertain whether he belonged to the deists, but he was confident that he was not a Puritan Christian. With his emphasis on Reason and Nature and his rejection of the method of revelation, Allen is one of the most aggressive and picturesque figures in the American Enlightenment. *Reason, the Only Oracle of Man* appeared in 1784, but is based on "contemplations" or "sentiments" which date back to his youth and includes much random commentary on more random reading. In it Allen attempted a compendious system of natural religion. Because of difficulties relating to its publication, only a few copies were originally circulated.

## REASON THE ONLY ORACLE OF MAN<sup>1</sup>

### CHAPTER I, SECTION I

#### THE DUTY OF REFORMING MANKIND FROM SUPERSTITION AND ERROR, AND THE GOOD CONSEQUENCES OF IT

THE desire of knowledge has engaged the attention of the wise and curious among mankind of all ages, which has been productive of extending the arts and sciences far and wide in the several quarters of the globe, and excited the contemplative to explore nature's laws in a gradual series of improvement, until philosophy, astronomy, geography and his-

tory, with many other branches of science, have arrived to a great degree of perfection.

It is nevertheless to be regretted, that the bulk of mankind, even in those nations which are most celebrated for learning and wisdom, are still carried down the torrent of superstition, and entertain very unworthy apprehensions of the Being, Perfections, Creation, and Providence of God, and their duty to him, which lays an indispensable obligation on the philosophic friends of human nature, unanimously to exert themselves in every lawful, wise, and prudent method, to endeavor

<sup>1</sup> From *Reason the Only Oracle of Man*, Philadelphia: 1836. The first edition appeared in 1784 at Bennington, Vermont.

to reclaim mankind from their ignorance and delusion, by enlightening their minds in those great and sublime truths concerning God and his providence, and their obligations to moral rectitude, which in this world, and that which is to come, cannot fail greatly to affect their happiness and well being.

Though "none by searching can find out God, or the Almighty to perfection," yet I am persuaded, that if mankind would dare to exercise their reason as freely on those divine topics, as they do in the common concerns of life, they would, in a great measure, rid themselves of their blindness and superstition, gain more exalted ideas of God and their obligations to him and one another, and be proportionably delighted and blessed with the views of his moral government, make better members of society, and acquire many powerful incentives to the practice of morality, which is the last and greatest perfection that human nature is capable of.

## SECTION II OF THE BEING OF GOD

The Laws of Nature having subjected mankind to a state of absolute dependence on something out of, and manifestly beyond themselves, or the compound exertion of their natural powers, gave them the first conception of a superior principle of existing; otherwise they could have had no possible conception of a superintending power. But this sense of dependancy, which results from experience and reasoning on the facts, which every day cannot fail to produce, has uniformly established the knowledge of our dependance to every individual of the species who are rational, which necessarily involves, or contains in it the idea of a ruling power, or that there is a God, which ideas are synonymous.

The globe with its productions, the planets in their motions, and the starry heavens in their magnitudes, surprise our senses and confound our reason, in their munificent lessons of instruction concerning God, by means whereof, we are apt to be more or less lost in our ideas of the object of divine adoration, though at the same time every one is truly

sensible that their being and preservation is from God. We are too apt to confound our ideas of God with his works, and take the latter for the former. Thus barbarous and unlearned nations have imagined, that inasmuch as the sun in its influence is beneficial to them in bringing forth the spring of the year, causing the production of vegetation, and food for their subsistence, that therefore it is their God: while others have located other parts of creation, and ascribe to them the prerogatives of God; and mere creatures and images have been substituted for gods by the wickedness or weakness of man, or both together. It seems that mankind in most ages and parts of the world have been fond of corporeal Deities with whom their outward senses might be gratified, or as fantastically diverted from the just apprehension of the true God, by a supposed supernatural intercourse with invisible and mere spiritual beings, to whom they ascribe divinity, so that through one means or other, the character of the true God has been much neglected, to the great detriment of truth, justice and morality in the world; nor is it possible, that mankind can be uniform in their religious opinions, or worship God according to knowledge, except they can form a consistent arrangement of ideas of the Divine character.

Although we extended our ideas retrospectively ever so far upon the succession, yet no one cause in the extended order of succession, which depends upon another prior to itself, can be the independent cause of all things: nor is it possible to trace the order of the succession of causes back to that self-existent cause, inasmuch as it is eternal and infinite, and therefore cannot be traced out by succession, which operates according to the order of time, consequently can bear no more proportion to the eternity of God, than time itself may be supposed to do, which has no proportion at all; as the succeeding arguments respecting the eternity and infinity of God will evince. But notwithstanding the series of the succession of causes cannot be followed in a retrospective succession up to the self-existent or eternal cause, it is nevertheless a perpetual and conclusive evidence of a God. For a succession of causes con-

sidered collectively, can be nothing more than effects of the independent cause, and as much dependant on it, as those dependant causes are upon one another; so that we may with certainty conclude that the system of nature, which we call by the name of natural causes, is as much dependant on a self-existent cause, as an individual of the species in the order of generation is dependant on its progenitors for existence. Such part of the series of nature's operations, which we understand has a regular and necessary connection with, and dependance on its parts, which we denominate by the names of cause and effect. From hence we are authorized from reason to conclude, that the vast system of causes and effects are thus necessarily connected, (speaking of the natural world only) and the whole regularly and necessarily dependant on a self-existent cause; so that we are obliged to admit an independent cause, and ascribe self-existence to it, otherwise it would not be an independent cause, and consequently not a God. But the eternity or manner of the existence of a self-existent and independent being is to all finite capacities utterly incomprehensible; yet this is so far from an objection against the reality of such a being, that it is essentially necessary to support the evidence of it; for if we could comprehend that being whom we call God, he would not be God, but must have been finite, and that in the same degree as those may be supposed to be who could comprehend him; therefore so certain as God is, we cannot comprehend his essence, eternity, or manner of existence. This should always be premised, when we assay to reason on the being, perfection, eternity and infinity of God, or of his creation and providence. As far as we understand nature, we are become acquainted with the character of God, for the knowledge of nature is the revelation of God. If we form in our imagination a compendious idea of the harmony of the universe, it is the same as calling God by the name of harmony, for there could be no harmony without regulation, and no regulation without a regulator, which is expressive of the idea of a God. Nor could it be possible, that there could be order or disorder, except we admit of such a thing as

creation, and creation contains in it the idea of a creator, which is another appellation for the Divine Being, distinguishing God from his creation. Furthermore there could be no proportion, figure or motion, without wisdom and power: wisdom to plan, and power to execute, and these are perfections, when applied to the works of nature, which signify the agency or superintendency of God. If we consider nature to be matter, figure and motion, we include the idea of God in that of motion; for motion implies a mover, as much as creation does a creator. If from the composition, texture and tendency of the universe in general, we form a complex idea of general good resulting therefrom to mankind, we implicitly admit a God by the name of good, including the idea of his providence to man. And from hence arises our obligations to love and adore God, because he provides for, and is beneficent to us: abstract the idea of goodness from the character of God, and it would cancel all our obligations to him, and excite us to hate and detest him as a tyrant; hence it is, that ignorant people are superstitiously misled into a conceit that they hate God, when at the same time it is only the idol of their own imagination, which they truly ought to hate and be ashamed of; but were such persons to connect the ideas of power, wisdom, goodness, and all possible perfection in the character of God, their hatred towards Him would be turned into love and adoration.

By extending our ideas in a larger circle, we shall perceive our dependance on the earth and waters of the globe which we inhabit, and from which we are bountifully fed and gorgeously arrayed, and next extend our ideas to the sun, whose fiery mass darts its brilliant rays of light to our terraqueous ball with amazing velocity, and whose region of inexhaustible fire supplies it with fervent heat, which causes vegetation and gilds the various seasons of the year with ten thousand charms: this is not the achievement of man, but the workmanship and providence of God. But how the sun is supplied with materials, thus to perpetuate its kind influences, we know not. But will anyone deny the reality of those beneficial influences, because we do

not understand the manner of the perpetuality of that fiery world, or how it became such a body of fire; or will anyone deny the reality of nutrition by food, because we do not understand the secret operation of the digesting powers of animal nature, or the minute particulars of its cherishing influence. None will be so stupid as to do it. Equally absurd would it be for us to deny the providence of God, by "whom we live, move, and have our being," because we cannot comprehend it.

We know that earth, water, fire and air, in their various compositions subserve us, and we also know that these elements are devoid of reflection, reason or design; from whence we may easily infer, that a wise, understanding, and designing being has ordained them to be thus subservient. Could blind chance constitute order and decorum, and consequently a providence? — That wisdom, order and design should be the production of non-entity, or of chaos, confusion and old night, is too absurd to deserve a serious confutation, for it supposeth that there may be effects without a cause, viz: produced by non-entity, or that chaos or confusion could produce the effects of power, wisdom and goodness; such absurdities as these we must assent to, or subscribe to the doctrine of a self-existent and providential being.

### SECTION III

#### THE MANNER OF DISCOVERING THE MORAL PERFECTIONS AND NATURAL ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

... Though the human mind bears no proportion to the divine, yet there is undoubtedly a resemblance between them. ... It will not be disputed but that mankind in plain and common matters understand justice from injustice, truth from falsehood, right from wrong, virtue from vice, and praise-worthiness from blame-worthiness, for otherwise they could not be accountable creatures. This being admitted, we are capable of forming a complex idea of a moral character, which when done in the most deliberate, the wisest and most rational manner in our power, we are certain bears a resemblance to the divine perfections. For as we learn from

the works of nature an idea of the power and wisdom of God, so from our own rational nature we learn an idea of his moral perfections.

### CHAPTER II, SECTION I

#### OF THE ETERNITY OF CREATION

As creation was the result of eternal and infinite wisdom, justice, goodness and truth, and effected by infinite power, it is like its great author, mysterious to us. How it could be accomplished, or in what manner performed, can never be comprehended by any capacity.

Eternal, whether applied to duration, existence, action, or creation, is incomprehensible to us, but implies no contradiction in either of them; for that which is above our comprehension we cannot perceive to be contradictory, nor on the other hand can we perceive its rationality or consistency. We are certain that God is a rational, wise, understanding Being, because he has in degree made us so, and his wisdom, power and goodness is visible to us in his creation, and government of the world; from these facts we are rationally induced to acknowledge him, and not because we can comprehend his being, perfections, creation or providence; could we comprehend God, he would cease to be what he is. ... As creation was the exertion of such an incomprehensible and perfect being, it must of necessary consequence be, in a great measure, mysterious to us; we can nevertheless be certain, that it has been of an equal eternity and infinitude of extension with God. ...

### SECTION III

#### OF THE ETERNITY AND INFINITUDE OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE

. . . . .

To suppose that God Almighty has confined his goodness to this world, to the exclusion of all others, is much similar to the idle fancies of some individuals in this world, that they, and those of their communion or faith, are the favorites of heaven exclusively; but these are narrow and big-

otted conceptions, which are degrading to a rational nature, and utterly unworthy of God, of whom we should form the most exalted ideas.

It may be objected that a man cannot subsist in the sun; but does it follow from thence, that God cannot or has not constituted a nature peculiar to that fiery region, and caused it to be as natural and necessary for it to suck in and breathe out flames of fire, as it is for us to do the like in air. Numerous are the kinds of fishy animals, which can no other way subsist but in the water, in which other animals would perish, (amphibious ones excepted) while other animals, in a variety of forms, either swifter or slower move on the surface of the earth, or wing the air: of these there are sundry kinds, which during the season of winter live without food; and many of the insects which are really possessed of animal life, remain frozen, and as soon as they are let loose by the kind influence of the sun, they again assume their wonted animal life; and if animal life may differ so much in the same world, what inconceivable variety may be possible in worlds innumerable, as applicable to mental, cogitative, and organized beings. Certain it is, that any supposed obstructions, concerning the quality or temperature of any or every of those worlds, could not have been any bar in the way of God Almighty, with regard to his replenishing his universal creation with moral agents. The unlimited perfection of God, could perfectly well adapt every part of his creation to the design of whatever rank or species of constituted beings, his Godlike wisdom and goodness saw fit to impart existence to; so that as there is no deficiency of absolute perfection in God, it is rationally demonstrative that the immense creation is replenished with rational agents, and that it has been eternally so, and that the display of divine goodness must have been as perfect and complete, in the antecedent, as it is possible to be in the subsequent eternity.

From this theological way of arguing on the creation and providence of God, it appears that the whole, which we denominate by the term, *nature*, which is the same as creation perfectly regulated, was eternally

connected together by the creator to answer the same all glorious purpose, to wit: the display of the divine nature, the consequences of which are existence and happiness to beings in general, so that creation, with all its productions operates according to the laws of nature, and is sustained by the self-existent eternal cause, in perfect order and decorum, agreeable to the eternal wisdom, unalterable rectitude, impartial justice, and immense goodness of the divine nature, which is the summary of God's providence. . . .

#### SECTION IV

#### THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD DOES NOT INTERFERE WITH THE AGENCY OF MAN

The doctrine of fate has been made use of in armies as a policy to induce soldiers to face danger. Mahomet taught his army that the "term of every man's life was fixed by God, and that none could shorten it, by any hazard that he might seem to be exposed to in battle or otherwise," but that it should be introduced into peaceable and civil life, and be patronized by any teachers of religion, is quite strange, as it subverts religion in general, and renders the teaching of it unnecessary: except among other necessary events it be premised, that it is necessary that they teach that doctrine, and that I oppose it from the influence of the same law of fate upon which thesis we are all disputing and acting in certain necessary circles, and if so, I make another necessary movement, which is, to discharge the public teachers of this doctrine, and expend their salaries in an economical manner, which might better answer the purposes of our happiness, or lay it out in good wine or old spirits to make the heart glad, and laugh at the stupidity or cunning of those who would have made us mere machines.

Some advocates for the doctrine of fate will also maintain that we are free agents, notwithstanding they tell us there has been a concatenation of causes and events, which has reached from God down to this time, and which will eternally be continued; that has and will controul and bring about every action of our lives, though there is not any thing in nature more certain than that we



cannot act necessarily, and freely in the same action, and at the same time, yet it is hard for such persons, who have verily believed that they are elected (and thus by a predetermination of God become his special favorites) to give up their notion of a predetermination of all events, upon which system their election and everlasting happiness is non-sensically founded; and on the other hand, it is also hard for them to go so evidently against the law of nature (or dictates of conscience) which intuitively evinces the certainty of human liberty, as to reject such evidence; and therefore hold to both parts of the contradiction, to wit, that they act necessarily, and freely, upon which contradictory principle, they endeavored to maintain the dictates of natural conscience, and also, their daring folly of being electedly and exclusively favorites of God.

#### CHAPTER IV, SECTION I

##### SPECULATIONS ON THE DOCTRINE OF THE DEPRIVITY OF HUMAN REASON

In the course of our speculations on divine providence we proceed next to the consideration of the doctrine of the depravity of human reason; a doctrine derogatory to the nature of man, and the rank and character of being which he holds in the universe, and which, if admitted to be true overturns knowledge and science and renders learning, instruction and books useless and impertinent; inasmuch as reason, depraved or spoiled, would cease to be reason; as much as the mind of a raving madman would of course cease to be rational: admitting the depravity of reason, the consequence would unavoidably follow, that as far as it may be supposed to have taken place in the midst of mankind, there could be no judges of it, in consequence of their supposed depravity; for without the exercise of reason, we could not understand what reason is, which would be necessary for us previously to understand, in order to understand what it is not; or to distinguish it from that which is its reverse. But for us to have the knowledge of what reason is, and the ability to distinguish it from that which is depraved, or is irrational, is incompatible

with the doctrine of the depravity of our reason. Inasmuch as to understand what reason is, and to distinguish it from that which is marred or spoiled, is the same to all intents and purposes, as to have, exercise and enjoy, the principle of reason itself, which precludes its supposed depravity: so that it is impossible for us to understand what reason is, and at the same time determine that our reason is depraved; for this would be that same as when we know that we are in possession and exercise of reason, to determine that we are not in possession or exercise of it.

It may be, that some who embrace the doctrine of the depravity of human reason, will not admit, that it is wholly and totally depraved, but that it is in a great measure marred or spoiled. But the foregoing arguments are easily applicable to a supposed depravity in parts, as in the whole; for in order to judge whether reason be depraved in part or not, it would be requisite to have an understanding of what reason may be supposed to have been, previous to its premised depravity; and to have such a knowledge of it, would be the same as to exercise and enjoy it in its lustre and purity; which would preclude the notion of a depravity in part, as well as in the whole; for it would be utterly impossible for us to judge of reason undepraved and depraved, but by comparing them together. But for depraved reason to make such a comparison, is contradictory, and impossible; so that if our reason have been depraved, we could not have had any conception of it any more than a beast. Men of small faculties in reasoning cannot comprehend the extensive reasonings of their superiors, how then can a supposed depraved reason, comprehend that reason, which is uncorrupted and pure? To suppose that it could, is the same as to suppose that depraved and undepraved reason is alike, and if so there needs no further dispute about it. . . .

We are told that the knowledge of the depravity of reason, was first communicated to mankind by the immediate inspiration of God. But inasmuch as reason is supposed to be depraved, what principle could there be in the human irrational soul, which could

receive or understand the inspiration, or on which it could operate, so as to represent, to those whom it may be supposed were inspired, the knowledge of the depravity of (their own and mankind's) reason (in general.) For a rational inspiration must consist of rational ideas; which presupposes, that the minds of those who were inspired, were rational, previous to such inspiration, which would be a downright contradiction to the inspiration itself; the import of which was to teach the knowledge of the depravity of human reason, which without reason could not be understood, and with reason it would be understood, that the inspiration was false....

That there are degrees in the knowledge of rational beings, and also in their capacities to acquire it, cannot be disputed, as it is so very obvious among mankind. But in all the retrospect gradations from the exalted reasonings of a Locke or a Newton, down to the lowest exercise of it among the species, still it is reason, and not depraved; for a less degree of reason by no means implies a depravity of it, nor does the imparting of reason argue its depravity, for what remains of reason, or rather the exercise of it, is reason still....

From what has been argued on this subject, in this and the preceding chapters, it appears that reason is not and cannot be depraved, but that it bears a likeness to divine reason, is of the same kind, and in its own nature as uniform as truth, which is the test of it; though in the divine essence, it is eternal and infinite, but in man it is eternal only, as it respects their immortality, and finite, as it respects capaciousness. Such people as can be prevailed upon to believe, that their reason is depraved, may easily be led by the nose, and duped into superstition at the pleasure of those in whom they confide, and there remain from generation to generation: for when they throw by the law of reason, *the only one* which God gave them to direct them in their speculations and duty, they are exposed to ignorant or insidious teachers, and also to their own irregular passions, and to the folly and enthusiasm of those about

them, which nothing but reason can prevent or restrain: Nor is it a rational supposition that the commonalty of mankind would ever have mistrusted that their reason was depraved, had they not been told so, and it is whispered about, that the first insinuations of it was from the Priests; (though the Armenian Clergymen in the circle of my acquaintance have exploded the doctrine.) Should we admit the depravity of reason, it would greatly affect the priesthood, or any other teachers of that doctrine, with the rest of mankind; but for depraved creatures to receive and give credit to a depraved doctrine, started and taught by depraved creatures, is the greatest weakness and folly imaginable, and comes nearer a proof of the doctrine of total depravity, than any arguments which have ever been advanced in support of it.

#### CHAPTER VI, SECTION IV

#### PRAYER CANNOT BE ATTENDED WITH MIRACULOUS CONSEQUENCES

Prayer to God is no part of a rational religion, nor did reason ever dictate it, but, was it duly attended to, it would teach us the contrary.

To make known our wants to God by prayer or to communicate any intelligence concerning ourselves or the universe to him, is impossible, since his omniscient mind has a perfect knowledge of all things, and therefore, is beheld to none of our correspondence to inform himself of our circumstances, or of what would be wisest and best to do for us in all possible conditions and modes of existence, in our never ending duration of beings. These, with the infinitude of things, have been eternally deliberated by the omniscient mind, who can admit of no additional intelligence, whether by prayer or otherwise, which renders it nugatory.

We ought to act up to the dignity of our nature, and demean ourselves, as creatures of our rank and capacity, and not presume to dictate anything, less or more, to the governor of the universe: who rules not by our prescriptions, but by eternal and infinite reason. To pray to God, or to make any

supplication to him, requesting certain favors for ourselves, or for any, or all the species, is inconsistent with the relation which subsists between God and man. . . . To pray, entreat, or make supplication to God, is neither more nor less than dictating to eternal reason, and entering into the province and prerogative of the Almighty; if this is not the meaning and import of prayer, it has none at all, that extends to the final events and consequences of things. To pray to God with a sense, that the prayer we are making will not be granted any more for our making it, or that our prayer will make no alteration in the state, order or disposal of things at all, or that the requests, which we make, will be no more likely to be granted, or the things themselves conferred upon us by God, than as though we had not prayed for them, would be stupidity or outright mockery, or "to be seen of men," in order to procure from them some temporary advantages. But on the other hand for us to suppose, that our prayers or praises do in any one instance or more alter the eternal constitution of things, or of the providence of God, is the same as to suppose ourselves so far forth to hold a share in the divine government, for our prayers must be supposed to effect something or nothing, if they effect nothing, they are good for nothing; but that they should effect any alteration in the nature of things, or providence of God, is inadmissible: for if they did, we should interfere with the providence of God in a certain degree, by arrogating it to ourselves. . . .

The nature of the immense universality of things having been eternally adjusted, constituted and settled, by the profound thought, perfect wisdom, impartial justice, immense goodness, and omnipotent power of God, it is of the greatest arrogance in us to attempt any alteration thereof. If we demean ourselves worthy of rational happiness, the laws of the moral system already established, will afford it us; and\*as to physical evils, prudent economy may make them tolerable, or ward most of them off for a season, though they will unavoidably bring about the separation of a soul and body, and terminate with animal life, whether we pray for or against it. . . .

The only way to procure food, raiment, or the necessities or conveniences of life, is by natural means; we do not get them by wishing or praying for, but by actual exertion; and the only way to obtain virtue or morality is to practice and habituate ourselves to it, and not to pray to God for it: he has naturally furnished us with talents or faculties suitable for the exercise and enjoyment of religion, and it is our business to improve them aright, or we must suffer the consequences of it. We should conform ourselves to reason, the path of moral rectitude, and in so doing, we cannot fail of recommending ourselves to God, and to our own consciences. This is all the religion, which reason knows or can ever approve of. . . .

## CHAPTER VIII, SECTION I

OF THE NATURE OF FAITH AND WHEREIN  
IT CONSISTS

Faith is the last result of the understanding, or the same which we call the conclusion, it is the consequence of a greater or less deduction of reasoning from certain premises previously laid down; it is the same as believing or judging of any matter of fact, or assenting to or dissenting from the truth of any doctrine, system or position; so that to form a judgment, or come to a determination on one's own mind, or to believe, or to have faith, is in reality the same thing, and is synonymously applied both in writing and speaking, for example, "*Abraham believed in God.*" Again, "*for he,*" speaking of Abraham, "*judged him faithful who had promised,*" and again, "*his faith was counted unto him for righteousness.*" It is not only in scripture that we meet with examples of the three words, to wit, belief, judgment, and faith, to stand for the marks of our ideas for the same thing, but also all intelligible writers and speakers apply these phrases synonymously, and it would be good grammar and sense, for us to say that we have faith in a universal providence, or that we judge that there is a universal providence. These three different phrases, in communicating our ideas

of providence, do every of them exhibit the same idea, to all persons of common understanding, who are acquainted with the English language. In fine every one's experience may convince them that they cannot assent to, or dissent from the truth of any matter of fact, doctrine or proposition whatever, contrary to their judgment; for the act of the mind in assenting to, or dissenting from any position, or in having faith or belief in favor of, or against any doctrine, system or proposition, could not amount to anything more or less, than the act of the judgment, or last dictate of the understanding, whether the understanding be supposed to be rightly informed or not; so that our faith in all cases is as liable to err, as our reason is to misjudge of the truth; and our minds act faith in disbelieving any doctrine or system of religion to be true, as much as in believing it to be so. From hence it appears, that the mind cannot act faith in opposition to its judgment, but that it is the resolution of the understanding itself committed to memory or writing, and can never be considered distinct from it. And inasmuch as faith necessarily results from reasoning, forcing itself upon our minds by the evidence of truth, or the mistaken apprehension of it, without any act of choice of ours, there cannot be any thing, which pertains to, or partakes of the nature of moral good or evil in it. For us to believe such doctrines or systems of religion, as appears to be credibly recommended to our reason, can no more partake of the nature of goodness or morality, than our natural eyes may be supposed to partake of it in their perception of colors; for the faith of the mind, and the sight of the eye are both of them necessary consequences, the one results from the reasoning of the mind, the other from the perception of the eye. To suppose a rational mind without the exercise of faith would be as absurd as to suppose a proper and complete eye without sight, or the perception of the common objects of that sense. The short of the matter is this, that without reason we could not have faith, and without the eye or eyes we could not see, but once admitting that we are rational, faith follows of course, naturally resulting from the dictates of reason.

## CHAPTER IX, SECTION II

ESSENCE BEING THE CAUSE OF IDENTITY, IS  
INCONSISTENT WITH PERSONALITY IN THE  
DIVINE NATURE

One God can have but one essence, which must have been eternal and infinite, and for that reason precludes all others from a participation of his nature, glory, and universal and absolute perfection.

When we speak of any being who by nature is capable of being rightfully denominated an individual, we conceive of it to exist in but one essence; so that essence as applied to God, denominates the divine nature; and as applied to man, it denotes an individual: for although the human race is with propriety denominated the race of man, and though every male of the species, is with equal propriety called man, for that they partake of one common sort of nature and likeness, yet the respective individuals are not one and the same. The person of A is not the person of B, nor are they conscious of each other's consciousness, and therefore the joy or the grief of A, is not and cannot be the joy or grief of B; this is what we know to be a fact from our own experience. The reason of this personal distinction is founded in nature, for though we partake of one common nature and likeness, yet we do not partake of one and the same essence. Essence is therefore, in the order of nature, the primary cause of identity or sameness and cannot be divided.

From hence we infer, that the doctrine of the Trinity is destitute of foundation, and tends manifestly to superstition and idolatry.

## CHAPTER XIII, SECTION II

OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE EXERCISE OF  
REASON, AND PRACTICE OF MORALITY, IN  
ORDER TO THE HAPPINESS OF MANKIND

A revelation, that may be supposed to be really of the institution of God, must also be supposed to be perfectly consistent or uniform, and to be able to stand the test of truth; therefore such pretended revelations, as are tendered to us as the contrivance of heaven, which do not bear that test, we may be

morally certain, was either originally a deception, or has since by adulteration become spurious.

Reason therefore must be the standard, by which we determine the respective claims of revelation; for otherwise we may as well subscribe to the divinity of the one as of the other, or to the whole of them, or to none at all. So likewise on this thesis, if reason rejects the whole of those revelations, we ought to return to the religion of nature and reason.

Undoubtedly it is our duty, and for our best good, that we occupy and improve the faculties, with which our creator has endowed us, but so far as prejudice, or prepossession of opinion prevails over our minds, in the same proportion, reason is excluded from our theory or practice. Therefore if we would acquire useful knowledge, we must first divest ourselves of those impediments; and sincerely endeavor to search out the truth; and draw our conclusions from reason and just argument, which will never conform to our inclination, interest or fancy; but we must conform to that if we would judge rightly. As certain as we determine contrary to reason, we make a wrong conclusion; therefore, our wisdom is, to conform to the nature and reason of things, as well in religious matters, as

in other sciences. Preposterously absurd would it be, to negative the exercise of reason in religious concerns, and yet, be actuated by it in all other and less occurrences of life. All our knowledge of things is derived from God, in and by the order of nature, out of which we cannot perceive, reflect or understand anything whatsoever; our external senses are natural; and those objects are also natural; so that ourselves, and all things about us, and our knowledge collected therefrom, is natural, and not supernatural; as argued in the fifth chapter.

An unjust composition never fails to contain error and falsehood. Therefore an unjust connection of ideas is not derived from nature, but from the imperfect composition of man. Misconnection of ideas is the same as misjudging, and has no positive existence, being merely a creature of the imagination; but nature and truth are real and uniform; and the rational mind by reasoning, discerns the uniformity, and is thereby enabled to make a just composition of ideas, which will stand the test of truth. But the fantastical illuminations of the credulous and superstitious part of mankind, proceed from weakness, and as far as they take place in the world subvert the religion of REASON, NATURE and TRUTH.

# Thomas Paine

## (1737-1809)

PAINÉ's life was full of sensational events and dramatic episodes. Born in England, he lived to fight against the land of his birth. Full of zeal for liberty, he fought vigorously in two revolutions and endured the hardships of prison in France. He was one of the most successful of pamphleteers, having much to do with sustaining the morale of Americans during the War of Independence. The radicals of England and America have at times made a Bible of *Common Sense*, *The Rights of Man*, and *The Age of Reason*. His earlier books, devoted largely to political liberty, made him very popular in America, but when he returned late in life after having published *The Age of Reason* in defense of religious revolt, he discovered that the reaction had set in against him. He died in poverty and neglect. Paine is one of the most typical spirits of the Enlightenment.

## THE AGE OF REASON<sup>1</sup>

### PART THE FIRST

#### Being an Investigation of True and Fabulous Theology

IT HAS been my intention, for several years past, to publish my thoughts upon religion; I am well aware of the difficulties that attend the subject, and, from that consideration, had reserved it to a more advanced period of life. I intended it to be the last offering I should make to my fellow-citizens of all nations, and that at a time when the purity of the motive that induced me to it, could not admit of a question, even by those who might disapprove the work.

The circumstance that has now taken place in France of the total abolition of the whole

national order of priesthood, and of everything appertaining to compulsive systems of religion, and compulsive articles of faith, has not only precipitated my intention, but rendered a work of this kind exceedingly necessary, lest, in the general wreck of superstition, of false systems of government, and false theology, we lose sight of morality, of humanity, and of the theology that is true.

As several of my colleagues, and others of my fellow-citizens of France, have given me the example of making their voluntary and individual profession of faith, I also will

<sup>1</sup> From *The Theological Works of Thomas Paine*. Boston: J. P. Mendum, the Investigator Office, 1859.

make mine; and I do this with all that sincerity and frankness with which the mind of man communicates with itself.

I believe in one God, and no more; and I hope for happiness beyond this life.

I believe the equality of man; and I believe that religious duties consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavouring to make our fellow creatures happy.

But, lest it should be supposed that I believe many other things in addition to these, I shall, in the progress of this work, declare the things I do not believe, and my reasons for not believing them.

I do not believe in the creed professed by the Jewish church, by the Roman church, by the Greek church, by the Turkish church, by the Protestant church, nor by any church that I know of. My own mind is my own church.

All national institutions of churches, whether Jewish, Christian, or Turkish, appear to me no other than human inventions, set up to terrify and enslave mankind, and monopolize power and profit.

I do not mean by this declaration to condemn those who believe otherwise; they have the same right to their belief as I have to mine. But it is necessary to the happiness of man, that he be mentally faithful to himself. Infidelity does not consist in believing, or in disbelieving; it consists in professing to believe what he does not believe.

It is impossible to calculate the moral mischief, if I may so express it, that mental lying has produced in society. When a man has so far corrupted and prostituted the chastity of his mind, as to subscribe his professional belief to things he does not believe, he has prepared himself for the commission of every other crime. He takes up the trade of a priest for the sake of gain, and, in order to qualify himself for that trade, he begins with a perjury. Can we conceive any thing more destructive to morality than this?

Soon after I had published the pamphlet, *Common Sense*, in America, I saw the exceeding probability that a revolution in the system of government would be followed by a revolution in the system of religion. The adulterous connection of church and state, wherever

it had taken place, whether Jewish, Christian, or Turkish, had so effectually prohibited, by pains and penalties, every discussion upon established creeds, and upon first principles of religion, that until the system of government should be changed, those subjects could not be brought fairly and openly before the world; but that whenever this should be done, a revolution in the system of religion would follow. Human inventions and priest-craft would be detected; and man would return to the pure, unmixed, and unadulterated belief of one God, and no more.

Every national church or religion has established itself by pretending some special mission from God, communicated to certain individuals. The Jews have their Moses; the Christians their Jesus Christ, their apostles, and saints; and the Turks their Mahomet, as if the way to God was not open to every man alike.

Each of those churches show certain books, which they call *revelation*, or the word of God. The Jews say, that their word of God was given by God to Moses, face to face; the Christians say, that their word of God came by divine inspiration; and the Turks say, that their word of God (the Koran) was brought by an angel from Heaven. Each of those churches accuse the other of unbelief; and, for my own part, I disbelieve them all.

As it is necessary to affix right ideas to words, I will, before I proceed further into the subject, offer some other observations on the word *revelation*. Revelation when applied to religion, means something communicated *immediately* from God to man.

No one will deny or dispute the power of the Almighty to make such a communication, if he pleases. But admitting, for the sake of a case, that something has been revealed to a certain person, and not revealed to any other person, it is revelation to that person only. When he tells it to a second person, a second to a third, a third to a fourth, and so on, it ceases to be a revelation to all those persons. It is revelation to the first person only, and *bearsay* to every other, and, consequently, they are not obliged to believe it.

It is a contradiction in terms and ideas, to call any thing a revelation that comes to us

at second-hand, either verbally or in writing. Revelation is necessarily limited to the first communication — after this, it is only an account of something which that person says was a revelation made to him; and though he may find himself obliged to believe it, it cannot be incumbent on me to believe it in the same manner; for it was not a revelation made to *me*, and I have only his word for it that it was made to him.

When Moses told the children of Israel that he received the two tables of the commandments from the hands of God, they were not obliged to believe him, because they had no other authority for it than his telling them so; and I have no other authority for it than some historian telling me so. The commandments carry no internal evidence of divinity with them; they contain some good moral precepts, such as any man qualified to be a lawgiver, or a moral legislator, could produce himself, without having recourse to supernatural intervention.\*

When I was told that the Koran was written in Heaven, and brought to Mahomet by an angel, the account comes too near the same kind of hearsay evidence and second-hand authority as the former. I did not see the angel myself, and, therefore, I have a right not to believe it.

When also I am told that a woman called the Virgin Mary said, or gave out, that she was with child without any cohabitation with a man, and that her betrothed husband, Joseph, said that an angel told him so, I have a right to believe them or not; such a circumstance required a much stronger evidence than their bare word for it; but we have not even this — for neither Joseph nor Mary wrote any such matter themselves; it is only reported by others that *they said so* — it is hearsay upon hearsay, and I do not choose to rest my belief upon such evidence.

It is, however, not difficult to account for the credit that was given to the story of Jesus Christ being the son of God. He was born when the heathen mythology had still some fashion and repute in the world, and mythology had prepared the people for the

belief of such a story. Almost all the extraordinary men that lived under the heathen mythology were reputed to be the sons of some of the gods. It was not a new thing, at that time, to believe a man to have been celestially begotten; the intercourse of gods with women was then a matter of familiar opinion. Their Jupiter, according to their accounts, had cohabited with hundreds; the story therefore had nothing in it either new, wonderful or obscene; it was conformable to the opinions that then prevailed among the people called Gentiles, or Mythologists, and it was those people only that believed it. The Jews, who had kept strictly to the belief of one God, and no more, and who had always rejected the heathen mythology, never credited the story.

It is curious to observe how the theory of what is called the Christian Church, sprung out of the tail of heathen mythology. A direct incorporation took place in the first instance, by making the reputed founder to be celestially begotten. The trinity of gods that then followed was no other than a reduction of the former plurality, which was about twenty or thirty thousand; the statue of Mary succeeded the statue of Diana or Ephesus; the deification of heroes changed into the canonization of saints, the mythologists had gods for every thing; the Christian Mythologists had saints for every thing; the church became as crowded with the one, as the pantheon had been with the other; and Rome was the place of both. The Christian theory is little else than the idolatry of the ancient Mythologists, accommodated to the purposes of power and revenue; and it yet remains to reason and philosophy to abolish the amphibious fraud.

Nothing that is here said can apply, even with the most distant disrespect, to the *real* character of Jesus Christ. He was a virtuous and an amiable man. The morality that he preached and practised was of the most benevolent kind; and though similar systems of morality had been preached by Confucius, and by some of the Greek philosophers, many years before; by the Quakers since; and by

\* It is, however, necessary to except the declaration which says that God *visits the sins of the fathers upon the children*; it is contrary to every principle of moral justice.



many good men in all ages, it has not been exceeded by any.

Jesus Christ wrote no account of himself, of his birth, parentage, or anything else; not a line of what is called the New Testament is of his own writing. The history of him is altogether the work of other people; and as to the account given of his resurrection and ascension, it was the necessary counterpart to the story of his birth. His historians, having brought him into the world in a supernatural manner, were obliged to take him out again in the same manner, or the first part of the story must have fallen to the ground.

The wretched contrivance with which this latter part is told, exceeds every thing that went before it. The first part, that of the miraculous conception, was not a thing that admitted of publicity; and therefore the tellers of this part of the story had this advantage, that though they might not be credited, they could not be detected. They could not be expected to prove it, because it was not one of those things that admitted of proof, and it was impossible that the person of whom it was told could prove it himself.

But the resurrection of a dead person from the grave, and his ascension through the air, is a thing very different as to the evidence it admits of, to the invisible conception of a child in the womb. The resurrection and ascension, supposing them to have taken place, admitted of public and ocular demonstration, like that of the ascension of a balloon, or the sun at noon day, to all Jerusalem at least. A thing which every body is required to believe, requires that the proof and evidence of it should be equal to all, and universal; and as the public visibility of this last related act, was the only evidence that could give sanction to the former part, the whole of it falls to the ground, because that evidence never was given. Instead of this, a small number of persons, not more than eight or nine, are introduced as proxies for the whole world, to say they saw it, and all the rest of the world are called upon to believe it. But it appears that Thomas did not believe the resurrection; and, as they say, would not believe without having ocular and manual demonstration himself. *So neither will I, and*

the reason is equally as good for me, and for every other person, as for Thomas.

It is in vain to attempt to palliate or disguise this matter. The story, so far as relates to the supernatural part, has every mark of fraud and imposition stamped upon the face of it. Who were the authors of it is as impossible for us now to know, as it is for us to be assured, that the books in which the account is related, were written by the persons whose names they bear; the best surviving evidence we now have respecting this affair is the Jews. They are regularly descended from the people who lived in the time this resurrection and ascension is said to have happened, and they say, *it is not true*. It has long appeared to me a strange inconsistency to cite the Jews as a proof of the truth of the story. It is just the same as if a man were to say, I will prove the truth of what I have told you, by producing the people who say it is false.

That such a person as Jesus Christ existed, and that he was crucified, which was the mode of execution at that day, are historical relations strictly within the limits of probability. He preached most excellent morality, and the equality of man; but he preached also against the corruptions and avarice of the Jewish priests, and this brought upon him the hatred and vengeance of the whole order of priesthood. The accusation which those priests brought against him was that of sedition and conspiracy against the Roman government, to which the Jews were then subject and tributary; and it is not improbable that the Roman government might have some secret apprehensions of the effects of his doctrine as well as the Jewish priests; neither is it improbable that Jesus Christ had in contemplation the delivery of the Jewish nation from the bondage of the Romans. Between the two, however, this virtuous reformer and revolutionist lost his life.

It is upon this plain narrative of facts, together with another case I am going to mention, that the Christian Mythologists, calling themselves the Christian Church, have erected their fable, which for absurdity and extravagance, is not exceeded by any thing that is to be found in the mythology of the ancients.

But some perhaps will say — Are we to have no word of God — no revelation! I answer, Yes: there is a word of God; there is a revelation.

THE WORD OF GOD IS THE CREATION WE BEHOLD: And it is in *this word*, which no human invention can counterfeit or alter, that God speaketh universally to man.

Human language is local and changeable, and is therefore incapable of being used as the means of unchangeable and universal information. The idea that God sent Jesus Christ to publish, as they say, the glad tidings to all nations, from one end of the earth to the other, is consistent only with the ignorance of those who knew nothing of the extent of the world, and who believed, as those world-saviors believed, and continued to believe, for several centuries (and that in contradiction to the discoveries of philosophers and the experience of navigators), that the earth was flat like a trencher; and that a man might walk to the end of it.

But how was Jesus Christ to make any thing known to all nations? He could speak but one language, which was Hebrew; and there are in the world several hundred languages. Scarcely any two nations speak the same language, or understand each other; and as to translations, every man who knows any thing of languages, knows that it was impossible to translate from one language to another, not only without losing a great part of the original, but frequently of mistaking the sense; and besides all this, the art of printing was wholly unknown at the time Christ lived.

It is always necessary that the means that are to accomplish any end, be equal to the accomplishment of that end, or the end cannot be accomplished. It is in this, that the difference between finite and infinite power and wisdom discovers itself. Man frequently fails in accomplishing his ends, from a natural inability of the power to the purpose; and frequently from the want of wisdom to apply power properly. But it is impossible for infinite power and wisdom to fail as man fail-eth. The means it useth are always equal to the end; but human language, more especially

as there is not an universal language, is incapable of being used as an universal means of unchangeable and uniform information, and therefore it is not the means that God useth in manifesting himself universally to man.

It is only in the CREATION that all our ideas and conceptions of a *word of God* can unite. The Creation speaketh an universal language, independently of human speech or human language, multiplied and various as they be. It is an ever-existing original, which every man can read. It cannot be forged; it cannot be counterfeited; it cannot be lost; it cannot be altered; it cannot be suppressed. It does not depend upon the will of man whether it shall be published or not; it publishes itself from one end of the earth to the other. It preaches to all nations and to all worlds; and this *word of God* reveals to man all that is necessary for man to know of God.

Do we want to contemplate his power? We see it in the immensity of the Creation. Do we want to contemplate his wisdom? We see it in the unchangeable order by which the incomprehensible whole is governed. Do we want to contemplate his munificence? We see it in the abundance with which he fills the earth. Do we want to contemplate his mercy? We see it in his not withholding that abundance even from the unthankful. In fine, do we want to know what God is? Search not the book called the Scripture, which any human hand might make, but the Scripture called the Creation.

The only idea man can affix to the name of God, is that of a *first cause*, the cause of all things. And, incomprehensible and difficult as it is for a man to conceive what a first cause is, he arrives at the belief of it, from the tenfold greater difficulty of disbelieving it. It is difficult beyond description to conceive that space can have no end; but it is more difficult to conceive an eternal duration of what we call time; but it is more impossible to conceive a time when there shall be no time.

In like manner of reasoning, every thing we behold carries in itself the internal evidence that it did not make itself. Every man is an evidence to himself, that he did not make himself; neither could his father make himself,

nor his grandfather, nor any of his race; neither could any tree, plant, or animal make itself; and it is the conviction arising from this evidence, that carries us on, as it were, by necessity, to the belief of a first cause eternally existing, of a nature totally different to any material existence we know of, and by the power of which all things exist; and this first cause man calls God.

It is only by the exercise of reason, that man can discover God. Take away that reason, and he would be incapable of understanding any thing; and, in this case it would be just as consistent to read even the book called the Bible to a horse as to a man. How then is it that those people pretend to reject reason?

Almost the only parts in the book called the Bible, that convey to us any idea of God, are some chapters in Job, and the 19th Psalm; I recollect no other. Those parts are true *deistical* compositions; for they treat of the *Deity* through his works. They take the book of Creation as the word of God, they refer to no other book, and all the inferences they make are drawn from that volume.

I insert, in this place, the 19th Psalm, as paraphrased into English verse by Addison. I recollect not the prose, and where I write this I have not the opportunity of seeing it.

The spacious firmament on high,  
With all the blue etherial sky,  
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,  
Their great original proclaim.  
The unwearied sun, from day to day,  
Does his Creator's power display;  
And publishes to every land,  
The work of an Almighty hand.  
Soon as the evening shades prevail  
The moon takes up the wondrous tale,  
And nightly to the listning earth,  
Repeats the story of her birth;  
Whilst all the stars that round her burn,  
And all the planets, in their turn,  
Confirm the tidings as they roll,  
And spread the truth from pole to pole.  
What though in solemn silence all  
Move round this dark terrestrial ball;  
What though no real voice, nor sound,  
Amidst their radiant orbs be found,  
In reason's ear they all rejoice,  
And utter forth a glorious voice,

For ever singing as they shine,  
THE HAND THAT MADE US IS DIVINE.

What more does man want to know, than that the hand or power, that made these things is divine, is omnipotent? Let him believe this with the force it is impossible to repel, if he permits his reason to act, and his rule of moral life will follow of course.

The allusions in Job have all of them the same tendency with this Psalm; that of deducing or proving a truth that would be otherwise unknown, from truths already known.

I recollect not enough of the passages in Job, to insert them correctly: but there is one occurs to me that is applicable to the subject I am speaking upon. "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?"

I know not how the printers have pointed this passage, for I keep no Bible; but it contains two distinct questions, that admit of distinct answers.

First — Canst thou by searching find out God? Yes; because in the first place, I know I did not make myself, and yet I have existence; and by *searching* into the nature of other things find that no other thing could make itself; and yet millions of other things exist; therefore it is, that I know, by positive conclusion resulting from this search, that there is a power superior to all those things, and that power is God.

Secondly — Canst thou find out the Almighty to *perfection*? No; not only because the power and wisdom He has manifested in the structure of the Creation that I behold is to me incomprehensible, but because even this manifestation, great as it is, is probably but a small display of that immensity of power and wisdom, by which millions of other worlds, to me invisible by their distance, were created and continue to exist.

It is evident that both of these questions are put to the reason of the person to whom they are supposed to have been addressed; and it is only by admitting the first question to be answered affirmatively, that the second could follow. It would have been unnecessary, and even absurd, to have put a second

question more difficult than the first, if the first question had been answered negatively. The two questions have different objects; the first refers to the existence of God, the second to his attributes; reason can discover the one, but it falls infinitely short in discovering the whole of the other.

I recollect not a single passage in all the writings ascribed to the men called apostles, that convey any idea of what God is. Those writings are chiefly controversial; and the subject they dwell upon, that of a man dying in agony on a cross, is better suited to the gloomy genius of a monk in a cell, by whom it is not impossible they were written, than to any man breathing the open air of the Creation. The only passage that occurs to me, that has any reference to the works of God, by which only his power and wisdom can be known, is related to have been spoken by Jesus Christ, as a remedy against distrustful care. "Behold the lilies of the field, they toil not, neither do they spin." This, however, is far inferior to the allusions in Job and in the 19th Psalm; but it is similar in idea, and the modesty of the imagery is correspondent to the modesty of the man.

As to the Christian system of faith, it appears to me as a species of atheism — a sort of religious denial of God. It professes to believe in a man rather than in God. It is a compound made up chiefly of manism with but little deism, and is as near to atheism as twilight is to darkness. It introduces between man and his Maker an opaque body, which it calls a Redeemer, as the moon introduces her opaque self between the earth and the sun, and it produces by this means a religious or an irreligious eclipse of light. It has put the whole orbit of reason into shade.

The effect of this obscurity has been that of turning every thing upside down, and representing it in reverse; and among the revolutions it has thus magically produced, it has made a revolution in Theology.

That which is now called natural philosophy, embracing the whole circle of science, of which Astronomy occupies the chief place, is the study of the works of God, and of the power and wisdom of God in his works, and is the true theology.

As to the theology that is now studied in its place, it is the study of human opinions, and of human fancies *concerning* God. It is not the study of God himself in the works that he has made, but in the works or writings that man has made; and it is not among the least of the mischiefs that the Christian system has done to the world, that it has abandoned the original and beautiful system of theology, like a beautiful innocent, to distress and reproach, to make room for the hag of superstition.

From the time I was capable of conceiving an idea, and acting upon it by reflection, I either doubted the truth of the Christian system, or thought it to be a strange affair; I scarcely knew which it was: but I well remember, when about seven or eight years of age, hearing a sermon read by a relation of mine, who was a great devotee of the church, upon the subject of what is called *redemption by the death of the Son of God*. After the sermon was ended, I went into the garden, and as I was going down the garden steps (for I perfectly recollect the spot) I revolted at the recollection of what I had heard, and thought to myself that it was making God Almighty act like a passionate man, that killed his son, when he could not revenge himself any other way; and as I was sure a man would be hanged that did such a thing, I could not see for what purpose they preached such sermons. This was not one of those kind of thoughts that had any thing in it of childish levity; it was to me a serious reflection, arising from the idea I had, that God was too good to do such an action, and also too almighty to be under any necessity of doing it. I believe in the same manner at this moment; and I moreover believe, that any system of religion that has any thing in it that shocks the mind of a child, cannot be a true system.

It seems as if parents of the Christian profession were ashamed to tell their children any thing about the principles of their religion. They sometimes instruct them in morals, and talk to them of the goodness of what they call Providence; for the Christian mythology has five deities — there is God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy

Ghost, the God Providence, and the Goddess Nature. But the Christian story of God the Father putting his son to death, or employing people to do it, (for that is the plain language of the story) cannot be told by a parent to a child; and to tell him that it was done to make mankind happier and better, is making the story still worse, as if mankind could be improved by the example of murder; and to tell him that all this is a mystery, is only making an excuse for the incredibility of it.

How different is this to the pure and simple profession of Deism! The true Deist has but one Deity; and his religion consists in contemplating the power, wisdom, and benignity of the Deity in his works, and in endeavoring to imitate him in every thing moral, scientific, and mechanical.

The religion that approaches the nearest of all others to true Deism, in the moral and benign part thereof, is that professed by the Quakers: but they have contracted themselves too much, by leaving the works of God out of their system. Though I reverence their philanthropy, I cannot help smiling at the conceit, that if the taste of a Quaker could have been consulted at the creation, what a silent and drab-colored creation it would have been! Not a flower would have blossomed its gaities, nor a bird been permitted to sing.

As, therefore, the Creator made nothing in vain, so also must it be believed that He organized the structure of the universe in the most advantageous manner for the benefit of man; and as we see, and from experience feel, the benefits we derive from the structure of the universe, formed as it is, which benefits we should not have had the opportunity of enjoying, if the structure, so far as relates to our system, had been a solitary globe — we can discover at least one reason why a *plurality* of worlds has been made, and that reason calls for the devotional gratitude of man, as well as his admiration.

But it is not to us, the inhabitants of this globe, only, that the benefits arising from a plurality of worlds are limited. The inhabitants of each of the worlds of which our sys-

tem is composed, enjoy the same opportunities of knowledge as we do. They behold the revolutionary motions of our earth, as we behold theirs. All the planets revolve in sight of each other; and, therefore, the same universal school of science presents itself to all.

Neither does the knowledge stop here. The system of worlds next to us exhibits, in its revolutions, the same principles and school of science, to the inhabitants of their system, as our system does to us, and in like manner throughout the immensity of space.

Our ideas, not only of the almightiness of the Creator, but of his wisdom and his beneficence, become enlarged in proportion as we contemplate the extent and the structure of the universe. The solitary idea of a solitary world, rolling or at rest in the immense ocean of space, gives place to the cheerful idea of a society or worlds, so happily contrived as to administer, even by their motion, instruction to man. We see our earth filled with abundance; but we forget to consider how much of that abundance is owing to the scientific knowledge the vast machinery of the universe has unfolded.

But, in the midst of those reflections, what are we to think of the Christian system of faith, that forms itself upon the idea of only one world, and that of no greater extent, as is before shown, than twenty-five thousand miles? An extent which a man, walking at the rate of three miles an hour, for twelve hours in the day, could he keep on in a circular direction, would walk entirely round in less than two years. Alas! what is this to the mighty ocean of space, and the almighty power of the Creator!

From whence then could arise the solitary and strange conceit, that the Almighty, who had millions of worlds equally dependent on his protection, should quit the care of all the rest, and come to die in our world, because, they say, one man and one woman had eaten an apple! And, on the other hand, are we to suppose that every world in the boundless creation, had an Eve, an apple, a serpent and a redeemer? In this case, the person who is irreverently called the Son of God, and sometimes God himself, would have nothing else

to do than to travel from world to world, in an endless succession of death, with scarcely a momentary interval of life.

It has been by rejecting the evidence, that the word or works of God in the creation affords to our senses, and the action of our reason upon that evidence, that so many wild and whimsical systems of faith, and of religion, have been fabricated and set up. There may be many systems of religion, that so far from being morally bad, are in many respects morally good: but there can be but *one* that is true; and that one necessarily must, as it ever will, be in all things consistent with the ever existing word of God that we behold in his works. But such is the strange construction of the Christian system of faith, that every evidence the Heavens afford to man, either directly contradicts it, or renders it absurd.

It is possible to believe, and I always feel pleasure in encouraging myself to believe it, that there have been men in the world, who persuade themselves that, what is called a *pious fraud*, might at least under particular circumstances, be productive of some good. But the fraud being once established, could not afterwards be explained; for it is with a pious fraud as with a bad action, it begets a calamitous necessity of going on.

The persons who first preached the Christian system of faith, and in some measure combined it with the morality preached by Jesus Christ, might persuade themselves that it was better than the heathen mythology that then prevailed. From the first preachers the fraud went on to the second, and to the third, till the idea of its being a pious fraud became lost in the belief of its being true; and that belief became again encouraged by the interests of those who made a livelihood by preaching it.

But though such a belief might, by such means, be rendered almost general among the laity, it is next to impossible to account for the continual persecution carried on by the church, for several hundred years, against the sciences, and against the professors of sciences, if the church had not some record or tradition, that it was originally no other than a pious fraud, or did not foresee, that it

could not be maintained against the evidence that the structure of the universe afforded.

Having thus shown the irreconcilable inconsistencies between the real word of God existing in the universe and that which is called *the word of God*, as shown to us in a printed book that any man might make, I proceed to speak of the three principal means that have been employed in all ages, and perhaps in all countries, to impose upon mankind.

Those three means are Mystery, Miracle, and Prophecy. The two first are incompatible with true religion, and the third ought always to be suspected.

With respect to mystery, every thing we behold is, in one sense, a mystery to us. Our own existence is a mystery; the whole vegetable world is a mystery. We cannot account how it is that an acorn, when put into the ground, is made to develop itself, and become an oak. We know not how it is that the seed we sow unfolds and multiplies itself, and returns to us such an abundant interest for so small a capital.

The fact, however, as distinct from the operating cause, is not a mystery, because we see it; and we know also the means we are to use, which is no other than putting seed in the ground. We know, therefore, as much as is necessary for us to know; and that part of the operation that we do not know, and which if we did we could not perform, the Creator takes upon himself and performs it for us. We are, therefore, better off than if we had been let into the secret, and left to do it for ourselves.

But though every created thing is, in this sense, a mystery, the word mystery cannot be applied to *moral truth*, any more than obscurity can be applied to light. The God in whom we believe is a God of moral truth, and not a God of mystery or obscurity. Mystery is the antagonist of truth. It is a fog of human invention, that obscures truth, and represents it in distortion. Truth never envelops *itself* in mystery; and the mystery in which it is at any time enveloped, is the work of its antagonist, and never of itself.

Religion, therefore, being the belief of a God, and the practice of moral truth, cannot

have connection with mystery. The belief of a God, so far from having any thing of mystery in it, is of all beliefs the most easy, because it arises to us, as is before observed, out of necessity. And the practice of moral truth, or, in other words, a practical imitation of the moral goodness of God, is no other than our acting towards each other as he acts benignly towards all. We *cannot* serve God in the manner we serve those who cannot do without such service; and, therefore, the only idea we can have of serving God, is that of contributing to the happiness of the living creation that God has made. This cannot be done by retiring ourselves from the society of the world, and spending a recluse life in selfish devotion.

The very nature and design of religion, if I may so express it, prove, even to demonstration, that it must be free from every thing of mystery, and unincumbered with every thing that is mysterious. Religion, considered as a duty, is incumbent upon every living soul alike, and, therefore, must be on a level to the understanding and comprehension of all. Man does not learn religion as he learns the secrets and mysteries of a trade. He learns the theory of religion by reflection. It arises out of the action of his own mind upon the things which he sees, or upon what he may happen to hear or to read, and the practice joins itself thereto.

# John Witherspoon

(1723-1794)

IN SCOTLAND, whence he migrated to America in 1768, John Witherspoon had been a clergyman. He published a diatribe in 1753, *Ecclesiastical Characteristics*, which favored the conservative side of the theological controversy then raging in Scotland. In 1757 he published *A Serious Enquiry into the Nature and Effects of the Stage*, which attacked all drama. In 1759 he made an attack on natural religion in a famous sermon entitled *The Trial of Religious Truth by its Moral Influence*. Witherspoon was the first professor of philosophy at the College of New Jersey (Princeton) and first of the line of representatives of Scottish Realism there. He was a signer of the Declaration of Independence, a member of the Continental Congress, and an active Presbyterian minister. At one time he vigorously disapproved of ministers participating in politics; but he finally became involved himself. Witherspoon is said to have coined the word "Americanism." The *Lectures on Moral Philosophy* and an *Essay on Money* reflect his practical interests. The text of the *Lectures* here used is the one prepared by Varum Lansing Collins under the auspices of the American Philosophical Association.

## LECTURES ON MORAL PHILOSOPHY<sup>1</sup>

### LECTURE II

CONSIDERING man as an individual, we discover the most obvious and remarkable circumstances of his nature, that he is a compound of body and spirit. I take this for granted here, because we are only explaining the nature of man. When we come to his sentiments and principles of action, it will be more proper, to take notice of the spirituality

and immortality of the soul, and how they are proved.

The body and spirit have a great reciprocal influence one upon another. The body on the temper and disposition of the soul, and the soul on the state and habit of the body. The body is properly the minister of the soul, the means of conveying perceptions to it, but nothing without it.

<sup>1</sup> *Lectures on Moral Philosophy*, edited by V. L. Collins under the auspices of the American Philosophical Association. Princeton University Press, 1912.



It is needless to enlarge upon the structure of the body; this is sufficiently known to all, except we descend to anatomical exactness, and then like all the other parts of nature it shows the infinite wisdom of the Creator. With regard to morals, the influence of the body in a certain view may be very great in enslaving men to appetite, and yet there does not seem any such connection with morals as to require a particular description. I think there is little reason to doubt that there are great and essential differences between man and man, as to the spirit and its proper powers; but it seems plain that such are the laws of union between the body and spirit, that many faculties are weakened and some rendered altogether incapable of exercise, merely by an alteration of the state of the body. Memory is frequently lost and judgment weakened by old age and disease. Sometimes by a confusion of the brain in a fall the judgment is wholly disordered. The instinctive appetites of hunger, and thirst, seem to reside directly in the body, and the soul to have little more than a passive perception. Some passions, particularly fear and rage, seem also to have their seat in the body, immediately producing a certain modification of the blood and spirits. This indeed is perhaps the case in some degree with all passions whenever they are indulged, they give a modification to the blood and spirits, which make them easily rekindled, but there are none which do so instantaneously arise from the body, and prevent deliberation, will and choice, as these now named. To consider the evil passions to which we are liable, we may say those that depend most upon the body, are fear, anger, voluptuousness, and those that depend least upon it, are ambition, envy, covetousness.

The faculties of the mind are commonly divided into these three kinds, the understanding, the will, and the affections; though perhaps it is proper to observe, that these are not three qualities wholly distinct, as if they were three different beings, but different ways of exerting the same simple principle. It is the soul or mind that understands, wills, or is affected with pleasure and pain. The understanding seems to have truth for its

object, the discovering things as they really are in themselves, and in their relations one to another. It has been disputed whether good be in any degree the object of the understanding. On the one hand it seems as if truth and that only belonged to the understanding; because we can easily suppose persons of equal intellectual powers and opposite moral characters. Nay, we can suppose malignity joined to a high degree of understanding and virtue or true goodness to a much lower. On the other hand, the choice made by the will seems to have the judgment or deliberation of the understanding as its very foundation. How can this be, it will be said if the understanding has nothing to do with good or evil. A considerable opposition of sentiments among philosophers, has arisen from this question. Dr. Clark, and some others make understanding or reason the immediate principle of virtue. Shaftsbury, Hutchinson, and others, make affection the principle of it. Perhaps neither the one nor the other is wholly right. Probably both are necessary.

The connection between truth and goodness, between the understanding and the heart, is a subject of great moment, but also of great difficulty. I think we may say with certainty that infinite perfection, intellectual and moral, are united and inseparable in the Supreme Being. There is not however in inferior natures an exact proportion between the one and the other; yet I apprehend that truth naturally and necessarily promotes goodness, and falsehood the contrary; but as the influence is reciprocal, malignity of disposition, even with the greatest natural powers, blinds the understanding, and prevents the perception of truth itself.

Of the will it is usual to enumerate four acts; desire, aversion, joy and sorrow. The two last, Hutchinson says are superfluous, in which he seems to be right. All the acts of the will may be reduced to the two great heads of desire and aversion, or in other words, chusing and refusing.

The affections are called also passions because often excited by external objects. In as far as they differ from a calm deliberate decision of the judgment, or determination

of the will, they may be called strong propensities, implanted in our nature, which of themselves contribute not a little to bias the judgment, or incline the will.

The affections cannot be better understood than by observing the difference between a calm deliberate general inclination, whether of the selfish or benevolent kind, and particular violent inclinations. Every man deliberately wishes his own happiness, but this differs considerably from a passionate attachment to particular gratifications, as a love of riches, honors, pleasures. A good man will have a deliberate fixed desire of the welfare of mankind; but this differs from the love of children, relations, friends, country.

The passions are very numerous and may be greatly diversified, because every thing, however modified, that is the object of desire or aversion, may grow by accident or indulgence, to such a size as to be called, and deserved to be called, a passion. Accordingly we express ourselves thus in the English language. A passion for horses, dogs, play.

However all the passions may be ranged under the two great heads of *love* and *hatred*. To the first belong esteem, admiration, goodwill, and every species of approbation, delight, and desire; to the other, all kinds of aversion, and ways of expressing it, *envy*, *malice*, *rage*, *revenge*, to whatever objects they may be directed.

Hope and fear, joy and sorrow, though frequently ranked among the passions, seem rather to be states or modifications of the mind, attending the exercise of every passion, according as its object is probable or improbable, possessed or lost.

Jealousy seems to be a passion of a middle nature, which it is not easy to say whether it should be ranked under the head of love or hatred. It is often said of jealousy between the sexes, that it springs from love; yet, it seems plainly impossible, that it can have place without forming an ill opinion of its object, at least in some degree. The same thing may be said of jealousy and suspicion in friendship.

The passions may be ranged in two classes in a different way, viz. as they are selfish or benevolent, public or private. There will be

great occasion to consider this distinction afterwards, in explaining the nature of virtue, and the motives that lead to it. What is observed now, is only to illustrate our nature as it really is. There is a great and real distinction between passions, selfish and benevolent. The first point directly, and immediately at our own interest in the gratification; the others point immediately at the happiness of others. Of the first kind, is the love of fame, power, property, pleasure. And of the second, is family and domestic affection, friendship and patriotism. It is to no purpose to say, that ultimately, it is to please ourselves, or because we feel a satisfaction in seeking the good of others; for it is certain, that the direct object in view in many cases, is to promote the happiness of others; and for this many have been willing to sacrifice every thing, even life itself.

After this brief survey of human nature, in one light, or in one point of view, which may be called its capacity, it will be necessary to return back, and take a survey of the way, in which we become acquainted with the objects about which we are to be conversant, or upon which the above faculties are to be exercised.

On this it is proper to observe in general, that there are but two ways in which we come to the knowledge of things, viz. 1st, Sensation, 2nd Reflection.

The first of these must be divided again into two parts, external and internal.

External arises from the immediate impression of objects from without. The external senses in number are five; seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting and smelling.

In these are observable the impression itself, or the sensation we feel, and the supposition inseparable from it, that it is produced by an external object. That our senses are to be trusted in the information they give us, seems to me a first principle, because they are the foundation of all our after reasonings. The few exceptions of accidental irregularity in the senses, can found no just objection to this, as there are so many plain and obvious ways of discovering and correcting it.

The reality of the material system I think, may be easily established, except upon such

principles as are subversive of all certainty, and lead to universal scepticism; and persons who would maintain such principles, do not deserve to be reasoned with, because they do not pretend to communicate knowledge, but to take all knowledge from us.

The Immaterialists say, that we are conscious of nothing, but the impression or feeling of our own mind; but they do not observe that the impression itself, implies and supposes something external, that communicates it, and cannot be separated from that supposition. Sometimes such reasoners tell us, that we cannot shew the substance separate from its sensible qualities; no more can any man shew me a sensible quality, separate from a particular subject. If any man will shew me whiteness, without shewing me any thing that is white, or roundness without any thing that is round, I will shew him the substance without either color or shape.

Immaterialism takes away the distinction between truth and falsehood. I have an idea of a house or tree in a certain place, and I call this true, that is, I am of opinion, there is really a house or tree in that place. Again, I form an idea of a house or tree, as what may be in that place; I ask what is the difference, if after all, you tell me, there is neither tree, house nor place any where existing. An advocate for that system says, that truth consists in the liveliness of the idea, than which nothing can be more manifestly false. I can form as distinct an idea of any thing that is not, as any thing that is, when it is absent from my sight. I have a much more lively idea of Jupiter and Juno, and many of their actions, from Homer and Virgil, though I do not believe that any of them ever existed, than I have of many things that I know happened within these few months.

The truth is, the immaterial system, is a wild and ridiculous attempt to unsettle the principles of common sense by metaphysical reasoning, which can hardly produce any thing but contempt in the generality of persons who hear it, and which I verily believe, never produced conviction even on the persons who pretend to espouse it.

## LECTURE IV

This therefore lays us under the necessity of searching a little further for the principle of moral action. In order to do this with the greater accuracy, and give you a view of the chief controversies on this subject, observe, that there are really three questions upon it, which must be inquired into, and distinguished. I am sensible, they are so intimately connected, that they are sometimes necessarily intermixed; but at others, not distinguishing, leads into error. The questions relate to

1. The nature of virtue.
2. The foundation of virtue.
3. The obligation of virtue.

When we inquire into the nature of virtue, we do enough, when we point out what it is, or show how we may come to the knowledge of every particular duty, and be able to distinguish it from the opposite vice. When we speak of the foundation of virtue, we ask or answer the question, Why is it so? Why is this course of action preferable to the contrary? What is its excellence? When we speak of the obligation of virtue, we ask by what law we are bound, or from what principles we ought to be obedient to the precepts which it contains or prescribes.

After speaking something to each of these — to the controversies that have been raised upon them — and the propriety or importance of entering far into these controversies, or a particular decision of them, I shall proceed to a detail of the moral laws or the several branches of duty according to the division first laid down.

1. As to the nature of virtue, or what it is; or, in other words, what is the rule by which I must try every disputed practice — that I may keep clear of the next question, you may observe, that upon all the systems they must have recourse to one or more of the following, viz. Conscience, reason, experience. All who found virtue upon affection, particularly Hutchinson, Shaftsbury and their followers, make the moral sense the rule of duty, and very often attempt to exclude the use of reason on this subject. These authors seem also to make benevolence and public affection the

standard of virtue, in distinction from all private and selfish passions.

Doctor Clark and most English writers of the last age, make reason the standard of virtue, particularly as opposed to inward sentiment or affection. They have this to say particularly in support of their opinion, that reason does in fact often controul and alter sentiment; whereas sentiment cannot alter the clear decisions of reason. Suppose my heart dictates to me anything to be my duty, as for example, to have compassion on a person detected in the commission of crimes; yet if, upon cool reflection, I perceive that suffering him to go unpunished will be hurtful to the community, I counteract the sentiment from the deductions of reason.

Again: Some take in the air of experience, and chiefly act upon it. All particularly who are upon the selfish scheme, find it necessary to make experience the guide, to show them what things are really conducive to happiness and what not.

We shall proceed to consider the opinions upon the nature of virtue, the chief of which are as follow:

1. Some say that virtue consists in acting agreeably to the nature and reason of things. And that we are to abstract from all affection, public and private, in determining any question upon it. Clark.

2. Some say that benevolence or public affection is virtue, and that a regard to the good of the whole is the standard of virtue. What is most remarkable in this scheme is, that it makes the sense of obligation in particular instances give way to a supposed greater good. Hutchinson.

3. One author (Wolloston Rel. of Nat. delineated) makes truth the foundation of virtue, and he reduces the good or evil of any action to the truth or falsehood of a proposition. This opinion differs not in substance, but in words only from Dr. Clark's.

4. Others place virtue in self love, and make a well regulated self love the standard and foundation of it. This scheme is best defended by Dr. Campbell, of St. Andrews.

5. Some of late have made sympathy the standard of virtue, particularly Smith in his Theory of Moral Sentiments. He says we

have a certain feeling, by which we sympathize, and as he calls it, go along with what appears to be right. This is but a new phraseology for the moral sense.

6. David Hume has a scheme of morals that is peculiar to himself. He makes every thing that is *agreeable* and *useful* virtuous, and vice versa, by which he entirely annihilates the difference between natural and moral qualities, making health, strength, cleanliness, as really virtues as integrity and truth.

7. We have an opinion published in this country, that virtue consists in the love of being as such.

Several of these authors do easily and naturally incorporate piety with their system, particularly Clark, Hutchinson, Campbell and Edwards.

And there are some who begin by establishing natural religion, and then found virtue upon piety. This amounts to the same thing in substance; for reasoners upon the nature of virtue only mean to show what the Author of nature has pointed out as duty. And after natural religion is established on general proofs, it will remain to point out what are its laws, which, not taking in revelation, must bring us back to consider our own nature, and the rational deductions from it.

2. The opinions on the foundation of virtue may be summed up in the four following:

1. The will of God. 2. The reason and nature of things. 3. The public interest. 4. Private interest.

1. The will of God. By this is not meant what was mentioned above, that the intimations of the divine will point out what is our duty; but that the reason of the difference between virtue and vice is to be sought no where else than in the good pleasure of God. That there is no intrinsic excellence in any thing but as he commands or forbids it. They pretend that if it were otherwise there would be something above the Supreme Being, something in the nature of things that would lay him under the law of necessity or fate. But notwithstanding the difficulty of our forming clear conceptions on this subject, it seems very harsh and unreasonable to say that the difference between virtue and vice is

no other than the divine will. This would be taking away the moral character even of God himself. It would not have any meaning then to say he is infinitely holy and infinitely perfect. But probably those who have asserted this did not mean any more than that the divine will is so perfect and excellent that all virtue is reduced to conformity to it — and that we ought not to judge of good and evil by any other rule. This is as true as that the divine conduct is the standard of wisdom.

2. Some found it in the reason and nature of things. This may be said to be true, but not sufficiently precise and explicit. Those who embrace this principle succeed best in their reasoning when endeavoring to show that there is an essential difference between virtue and vice. But when they attempt to show wherein this difference doth or can consist, other than public or private happiness, they speak with very little meaning.

3. Public happiness. This opinion is that the foundation of virtue, or that which makes the distinction between it and vice, is its tendency to promote the general good; so that utility at bottom is the principle of virtue, even with the great patrons of disinterested affection.

4. Private happiness. Those who choose to place the foundation of virtue here, would have us to consider no other excellence in it than what immediately conduces to our own gratification.

Upon these opinions I would observe, that there is something true in every one of them, but that they may be easily pushed to an error by excess.

The nature and will of God is so perfect as to be the true standard of all excellence, natural and moral: and if we are sure of what he is or commands, it would be presumption and folly to reason against it, or put our views of fitness in the room of his pleasure; but to say that God, by his will, might have made the same temper and conduct virtuous and excellent, which we now call vicious, seems to unhinge all our notions of the supreme excellence even of God himself.

Again, there seems to be in the nature of things an intrinsic excellence in moral worth,

and an indelible impression of it upon the conscience, distinct from producing or receiving happiness, and yet we cannot easily illustrate its excellence but by comparing one kind of happiness with another.

Again, promoting the public or general good seems to be so nearly connected with virtue, that we must necessarily suppose that universal virtue could be of universal utility. Yet there are two excesses to which this has sometimes led. — One the fatalist and necessitarian schemes to which there are so many objections, and the other, the making the general good the ultimate practical rule to every particular person, so that he may violate particular obligations with a view to a more general benefit.

Once more, it is certain that virtue is as really connected with private as with public happiness, and yet to make the interest of the agent the only foundation of it, seems so to narrow the mind, and to be so destructive to the public and generous affections as to produce the most hurtful effects.

If I were to lay down a few propositions on the foundation of virtue, as a philosopher, they should be the following:

1. From reason, contemplation, sentiment and tradition, the Being and infinite perfection and excellence of God may be deduced; and therefore what he is, and commands, is virtue and duty. Whatever he has implanted in uncorrupted nature as a principle, is to be received as his will. Propensities resisted and contradicted by the inward principle of conscience, are to be considered as inherent or contracted vice.

2. True virtue certainly promotes the general good, and this may be made use of as an argument in doubtful cases, to determine whether a particular principle is right or wrong, but to make the good of the whole our immediate principle of action, is putting ourselves in God's place, and actually superseding the necessity and use of the particular principles of duty which he hath impressed upon the conscience. As to the whole I believe the universe is faultless and perfect, but I am unwilling to say it is the *best* possible system, because I am not able to understand such an argument, and because it seems

to me absurd that infinite perfection should exhaust or limit itself by a created production.

3. There is in the nature of things a difference between virtue and vice, and however much virtue and happiness are connected by the divine law, and in the event of things, we are made so as to feel towards them, and conceive of them, as distinct. We have the simple perceptions of duty and interest.

4. Private and public interest may be promoted by the same means, but they are dis-

tinct views; they should be made to assist, and not destroy each other.

The result of the whole is, that we ought to take the rule of duty from conscience enlightened by reason, experience, and every way by which we can be supposed to learn the will of our Maker, and his intention in creating us such as we are. And we ought to believe that it is as deeply founded as the nature of God himself, being a transcript of his moral excellence, and that it is productive of the greatest good.

## PART THREE

### *Transcendentalism*

---

THE most striking intellectual movement in the history of America began in Boston in the study of George Ripley on September 19, 1836. Ripley had called together a small group which included Alcott, Emerson, Hedge, Francis, and Clark, "to see how far it would be possible for earnest minds to meet." All of the men had had a Unitarian background, but all of them were reacting against what had become its pale negativism. They felt that the time had come to formulate a new and more vital faith than any which America then had. The Transcendental Movement was the result.

There were at least three European streams of thought which went into the making of Transcendentalism. Platonism was an unquestioned influence. Emerson wrote that "Plato is philosophy and philosophy is Plato," and there would have been no disagreement among his contemporaries. Plato stood for the conviction that the universe is the expression of mind, and that it is ruled by laws which are in essence moral. The good is primary and from it come all things. As a result of this belief he saw the world as divided into two realms, one permanent and unified, the other transient and plural. As Shelley put it: "The One remains, the Many change and pass"; the good life is to be interpreted as a turning from the many to the One. In one respect the Transcendentalists were more Neo-Platonic than they were Platonic. Plato had always insisted that a rigorously dialectical reason was the source of truth, while Plotinus had found his insight in mystic vision. Here, at least, the Transcendentalists turned from the master to his disciple.

There was in Transcendentalism not only a philosophical, but also an ethical idealism which was rooted in its Calvinistic inheritance, the second European influence. There had been two contradictory aspects to New England Calvinism. It was dominated by a high moral seriousness, but it was also mired in the world's business. There was a conflict between God and Mammon which ended in victory for the latter. Idealism had been starved in New England by the time of the Transcendentalists. The middle of the nineteenth century saw a reawakening of the ethical passion of Puritanism, a brief moment when the prophet dominated the business man. Abolition, women's rights, temperance, all had their advocates just because the reformers were so convinced that the universe was deeply moral and that injustice was a violation of the laws of God.

Finally, there was the influence of Romanticism. Parrington <sup>1</sup> rightly remarks that,

<sup>1</sup> Parrington, V. L., *Main Currents of American Thought*, vol. II, *The Romantic Revolution in America*, p. 322.

"Changing its name and arraying itself in garments cut after the best Yankee fashion, the gospel of Jean Jacques presently walked the streets of Boston, and spoke from its most respectable pulpits under the guise of Unitarianism." W. E. Channing was the one who carried the new message; it was he more than any other who transformed the New England of Puritanism into the New England of Transcendentalism. Romanticism had done three things for him. It convinced him that God is love, that man is potentially good, and that religion is a just life. It would be hard to imagine a more thorough-going transformation of Calvinism. Instead of a harsh God demanding unconditional obedience from sinful men, Channing substituted a God of love who gave men the freedom to think for themselves that they might help to bring the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. In Channing's phrase, religion was "the adoration of goodness."

German romanticism, though it came later to New England, was no less influential. Kant, Goethe, and Herder gave to Parker, Emerson, and the rest a realization that experience was wider than the reason of the Enlightenment and encouraged them in their reaction against the empiricism of Locke and the scepticism of Hume. The sum total of this influence was to make faith the primary source of knowledge, and to stress the creativity of man.

Coleridge was the most influential of the English romanticists upon the group. Nothing could have fitted in better with the transcendental temper of mind than his distinction between the Understanding and the Reason. Understanding equals science, but reason is wisdom, a kind of revelation which comes only through deep feeling. The Transcendentalists often accepted the results of science, but they never accepted its claim to be the only, or even primary, source of truth. "From some alien energy the visions come," said Emerson, and there was no question for him that these visions brought a far deeper wisdom than human experience expressed in scientific terms could ever give.

But Transcendentalism was no mere assortment of various traditions, however deeply it had been influenced by older philosophies. There were three articles in its creed; the divinity of nature, the worth of man, and the capacity of man to know the truth directly. Historically, it was a reaction against the empiricism of Locke and the Enlightenment.

Theodore Parker in his essay "Transcendentalism" gives an illuminating analysis of the distinction between what he calls "sensationalism" and the new faith. Over and over Parker reiterates that empiricism cannot get beyond facts. The only knowledge worth having is marked by certainty, and that can never be reached when men start with sensations. Furthermore, absolute justice cannot be founded on an empirical base. Intellectual scepticism is ultimately moral scepticism. Where was the divine imperative of duty? There was nothing left save what Carlyle had called the "pig philosophy" of Utilitarianism. Instead of relying upon experience the Transcendentalists turned to the mind itself, and found there faculties which transcend the senses and give intuitions that need no validation. This was what Parker demanded, and it is fortunate that it is what he found. The practical necessity of reforming society as well as revealing to man his divine destiny required finality. With their passion for the absolute, empiricism as a basis for knowledge had to go.

Such an attitude leads naturally to an idealistic metaphysics. For all the group reality lay not in, but behind, the world of sense. The physical world was the passing phenom-



enon. In its essence nature was the expression of spirit. Indeed the world of matter became at times so unreal for Emerson that he could say: "The outward circumstance is a dream and a shade." It was not strange that one of their dominant ends of living was the attempt to pierce this veil that hid them from divinity.

One further characterization of the movement needs to be made. Nature, which was divine, included man. This belief in the divinity of man combined with the older Calvinism to produce a strong humanitarianism. The Transcendentalists thought of themselves as revolutionists; they set out to make all things new. There is not a significant figure among them who was not at one time or another involved in subversive activities. Samuel May was mobbed five times within one month for preaching abolition. Thoreau went to prison rather than pay a tax to the state which countenanced slavery, and followed this protest with his *Duty of Civil Disobedience*. Parker was indicted for obstructing the Fugitive Slave Law, which he had most certainly done. Alcott hid a Negro who passed through Concord on the underground railway. Even the aloof Emerson went home with a copy of the Fugitive Slave Law in his pocket to sit down before his *Journal* and write: "I will not obey it, by God."

Transcendentalism had a philosophy, but it was far more than a philosophical system. It has at various times been referred to as "an enthusiasm," "a gospel," "a challenge," "an intellectual, aesthetic, and spiritual ferment." There could have been no finer or more inclusive summary of the movement than that given by Parker in *Transcendentalism*.

"The problem of transcendental philosophy is no less than this, to revise the experience of mankind and try its teachings by the nature of mankind; to test ethics by conscience, science by reason; to try the creeds of the churches, the constitutions of the states by the constitution of the universe; to reverse what is wrong, supply what is wanting, and command the just."

Emerson's significance as the leading figure in Transcendentalism would alone justify more detailed analysis of his work. But he was far more than simply a representative figure of an important movement. Royce called him one of the three outstanding American philosophers, and there are many who would consider him the greatest thinker that America has produced.

It is important to recognize at the beginning that Emerson was never a systematic philosopher. He was an oracle, not a logician. He proclaimed the truth, he never argued it; and since he was completely uninterested in coherence or consistency he frequently contradicted himself. "He could see, but he could not prove; . . . His intuitions were his sole guide; what they revealed appeared to him self-evident; the ordinary paths by which men arrive at conclusions were closed to him."<sup>1</sup>

He, himself, recognized this intuitive basis, and defended it. Truth, to him, was not something to be sought, it was to be received by those who passively awaited with open minds the revelations from a realm deeper than that of the senses. He disbelieved in the empirical method, at least so far as any important truth was concerned. He was suspicious of the whole scientific method. "I distrust the facts and the inferences." "I see not, if one be once caught in this trap of so-called sciences, any escape for the man from

<sup>1</sup> Garnett, Richard, *Great Writers: Emerson*, p. 93.

the links of the chain of physical necessity. Given such an embryo, such a history must follow. On this platform one lives in a stry of sensualism, and would soon come to suicide." He was like all the Transcendentalists in his repudiation of empiricism, but none of the others went so far in their contempt for the scientific analysis of experience as a guide for life.

His two dominant interests were in nature and in man, and the two ultimately coincided. The essay *Nature* was his first published work, but it contained the essence of all he ever had to say. Years later in *The Poet* he declared "For the world is not painted or adorned, but is from the beginning beautiful, and God has not made some beautiful things, but Beauty is the creator of the universe." That might well have been the theme for *Nature*. The world is the expression of moral purpose. "The moral law lies at the center of nature and radiates to the circumference . . . Every animal function . . . shall . . . echo the Ten Commandments."

This could only be true, of course, if spirit were the primary fact, and he affirms this in words that are reminiscent of idealists from Plato down. "Every natural fact is a symbol of some spiritual fact . . ." "The whole of nature is a metaphor of the human mind." As a result of this conviction of the spiritual origin of nature, the foreground often became merely a symbol pointing to the reality beyond and behind. "The world is a divine dream from which we may presently awake to the glories and certainties of day." Five years after he had made explicit his faith he reaffirmed it in *The Oversoul*. "From within or from behind, a light shines through us upon things and makes us aware that we are nothing, but the light is all." How far this attitude could be carried into daily life is, perhaps, uncertain, though the story is told that while carrying in wood one day, he remarked: "I suppose we must do this as if it were real." Certain it is, however, that he shared profoundly the conviction of religious men of all ages that the things which are seen are temporal, but that the things which are not seen are eternal.

When one turns to a consideration of what he had to say about man there is no sharp break. Because of the immanence of divinity in man, he is a part of nature and nature is one with him. "Within man is the soul of the whole." It is not surprising to find him saying in *The American Scholar*: "the ancient precept, 'Know thyself,' and the modern precept, 'Study nature,' become at last one maxim."

This emphasis on the divinity of man results in what is for many the most attractive part of Emerson's philosophy: stress on the freedom and creative capacity of man. *The American Scholar*, *The Divinity School Address*, and the essay on *Self-Reliance* all reflect this conviction. The first of the three was described by Holmes as "our intellectual Declaration of Independence." It was a plea to Americans to cease depending upon the European traditions, and, indeed, upon the past in any form. "We will walk on our own feet; we will work with our own hands; we will speak our own minds." The same ideas when applied to religion in *The Divinity School Address* were recognized as marking a sharp break with all theological traditions; he was encouraging men to seek their own revelation. "... it is still true that tradition characterizes the preaching of this country; that it comes out of the memory, and not out of the soul."

In *Self-Reliance*, his most famous and popular essay, the revolutionary implications of this attitude emerge. "Whoso would be a man, must be a nonconformist." In later

years he reiterated this thought in only slightly different words: "Wherever a man comes there comes a revolution." Just because he was so sure of the beneficent laws of the universe he was all the more determined that man should challenge the existing faiths and institutions, that he should stand upon his own feet, and trust himself.

We have spoken of the contradictions to be found in his writings. They are most clearly seen when we turn to his attitude toward the evil in the world. On the one hand there was his Puritan inheritance which was not inclined to underestimate the imperfections either of nature or of man. "Famine, typhus, frost, war, suicide and the effete races must be reckoned calculable parts of the system of the world," he said in *Fate*, and other passages of a similar nature might be quoted. Yet deeper than any recognition of wrong was his faith in the essential perfection of the world. How could it be otherwise with a philosophy so thoroughly teleological? Evil had in some way to be made unreal. "Good is positive. Evil is merely privative," was the solution given in the *Divinity School Address*.

Many quotations illustrating this optimism might be found. Rogers<sup>1</sup> gives three which are typical. "I know against all appearance that the universe can receive no detriment, that there is a remedy for every wrong, and a satisfaction for every goal." "Misery is superficial and the remedy . . . of presenting to the mind universal truth is a perfect one." In *Spiritual Laws* Emerson refers to the fact that it is "only the finite that has wrought and suffered, the infinite lies stretched in smiling repose."

It is this attitude which perplexed even his friends, and led to the charge of an ultimate unconcern with evil and an insensitiveness to tragedy. So strong an admirer as Carlyle wrote him:

"You seem to me in danger of dividing yourselves [the editors of the *Dial*] from the fact of this present universe, in which alone, ugly as it is, can I find any anchorage, and soaring away after these Ideas, Beliefs, Revelations, and such like, — into perilous altitudes as I think . . . It is the whole Past and the whole Future, this same cotton-spinning, dollar-hunting, canting and shrieking, very wretched generation of ours. Come back into it, I tell you."<sup>2</sup>

That Emerson saw the implications of his attitude is indicated by one of his replies to Carlyle: "My whole philosophy . . . teaches acquiescence and optimism."

Although a century has passed, it is difficult to evaluate adequately what Emerson's influence has been. For some, the important aspect of his work was his encouragement to cut loose from tradition and to be independent; to others it was his conviction of the reality of the unseen. For some, it was the revolutionary implications of his teaching; for others, his insistence that not science but intuition was the source of knowledge. Perhaps it is just this diversity of his message which is the surest mark of his greatness.

<sup>1</sup> A. K. Rogers, *English and American Philosophy Since 1800*, pp. 217, 218, 219.

<sup>2</sup> *Correspondence*, vol. 1, p. 367. Quoted by Henry David Gray, *Emerson: A Statement of New England Transcendentalism as Expressed in the Philosophy of Its Chief Exponent*, p. 88.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

*I. Primary Sources:*

- CHANNING, WILLIAM ELLERY, THE WORKS OF WILLIAM E. CHANNING, D.D., WITH AN INTRODUCTION. Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1875.
- EMERSON, RALPH WALDO, THE COMPLETE WORKS OF RALPH WALDO EMERSON. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1903-04. The Centenary Edition.
- EMERSON, RALPH WALDO, THE HEART OF EMERSON'S JOURNALS, BLISS PERRY, editor; Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1926.
- EMERSON, RALPH WALDO, THE LETTERS OF RALPH WALDO EMERSON. 6 vols. New York: Columbia University Press, 1938.
- PARKER, THEODORE, WORKS. Centenary Edition. Boston: Beacon Press, 1907.
- THOREAU, HENRY DAVID, THE WRITINGS OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU. 20 vols. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1907.
- THOREAU, HENRY DAVID, THE HEART OF THOREAU'S JOURNALS. ODELL SHEPARD, editor; Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1927.
- WHITMAN, WALT, THE COMPLETE WORKS OF WALT WHITMAN. 10 vols. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1902.

*II. Secondary Sources:*

- BROOKS, VAN WYCK, THE FLOWERING OF NEW ENGLAND. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1936.
- CABOT, JAMES E., A MEMOIR OF RALPH WALDO EMERSON. 2 vols. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1887.
- CANBY, HENRY S., THOREAU. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1939.
- CARPENTER, FREDERIC I., RALPH WALDO EMERSON, REPRESENTATIVE SELECTIONS WITH INTRODUCTION, BIBLIOGRAPHY, AND NOTES. New York: American Book Company, 1934.
- COMMAGER, HENRY STEELE, THEODORE PARKER. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1936.
- FROTHINGHAM, OCTAVIUS, TRANSCENDENTALISM IN NEW ENGLAND. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1880.
- GRAY, HENRY DAVID, EMERSON. A STATEMENT OF NEW ENGLAND TRANSCENDENTALISM AS EXPRESSED IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF ITS CHIEF EXPONENT. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1917.
- HICKS, GRANVILLE, THE GREAT TRADITION. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1933.
- JOHNSON, ALLEN, editor, DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN BIOGRAPHY. Channing, Emerson, Parker, Thoreau, Whitman.
- MUMFORD, LEWIS, THE GOLDEN DAY. New York: Boni and Liveright, 1926.
- MUMFORD, LEWIS, HERMAN MELVILLE. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1929.
- PARRINGTON, V. L., MAIN CURRENTS IN AMERICAN THOUGHT. Vol. II, THE ROMANTIC REVOLUTION IN AMERICA.
- RILEY, I. W., AMERICAN THOUGHT.
- ROGERS, A. K., ENGLISH AND AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY SINCE 1800. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1922.
- SANBORN, FRANKLIN B., HENRY D. THOREAU. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1889.
- SANTAYANA, GEORGE, "THE GENTLE TRADITION IN AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY," WINDS OF DOCTRINE. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912.
- SHEPARD, ODELL, PEDLAR'S PROGRESS. THE LIFE OF BRONSON ALCOTT. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1937.
- TOWNSEND, H. G., PHILOSOPHICAL IDEAS IN THE UNITED STATES.
- WOODBERRY, GEORGE EDWARD, RALPH WALDO EMERSON. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1907.

# William Ellery Channing

## (1780-1842)

CHANNING as a boy sat under the preaching of Samuel Hopkins, and it was with decided difficulty that he later broke with the Calvinist theology. Contributing to his emancipation were the two years he spent as a young man in Virginia, where he came under the influence of Jefferson, and read with deep interest the writings of Rousseau. In 1815 he preached his famous sermon at the ordination of Jared Sparks in which he gave a definitive statement to the new theology.

There has been a difference of opinion as to whether Channing belongs more to the American Enlightenment or to Transcendentalism.<sup>1</sup> He was, perhaps, at once the climax of the earlier movement and a forerunner of the later. He was a Unitarian clergyman whose theology stressed primarily the righteousness of God, the worth of man, and the sacredness of reason. Obviously, his differences with Calvinism were very deep. His sermon *Unitarian Christianity* had a profound influence in his day, and has remained the clearest expression of the religious movement which had so strong an influence in loosening the hold of Puritanism.

### UNITARIAN CHRISTIANITY<sup>2</sup>

I THESS. 5:21: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

THE peculiar circumstances of this occasion not only justify but seem to demand a departure from the course generally followed by preachers at the introduction of a brother into the sacred office. It is usual to speak of the nature, design, duties, and advantages of

the Christian ministry; and on these topics I should now be happy to insist, did I not remember that a minister is to be given this day to a religious society whose peculiarities of opinion have drawn upon them much remark, and, may I not add, much reproach.

<sup>1</sup> See "The Intellectual Background of William Ellery Channing," by Herbert Wallace Schneider, *Church History*, vol. VII, no. 1, March, 1938. In this article Professor Schneider impressively marshals the evidence for placing Channing primarily in the Enlightenment.

<sup>2</sup> Discourse at the Ordination of the Reverend Jared Sparks, Baltimore, 1819, from *The Works of William E. Channing, D.D.* Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1877.

Many good minds, many sincere Christians, I am aware, are apprehensive that the solemnities of this day are to give a degree of influence to principles which they deem false and injurious. The fears and anxieties of such men I respect; and, believing that they are grounded in part on mistake, I have thought it my duty to lay before you, as clearly as I can, some of the distinguishing opinions of that class of Christians in our country who are known to sympathize with this religious society. I must ask your patience, for such a subject is not to be despatched in a narrow compass. I must also ask you to remember that it is impossible to exhibit, in a single discourse, our views of every doctrine of revelation, much less the differences of opinion which are known to subsist among ourselves. I shall confine myself to topics on which our sentiments have been misrepresented, or which distinguish us most widely from others. May I not hope to be heard with candor? God deliver us all from prejudice and unkindness, and fill us with the love of truth and virtue!

There are two natural divisions under which my thoughts will be arranged. I shall endeavor to unfold, 1st, The principles which we adopt in interpreting the Scriptures; and 2ndly, Some of the doctrines which the Scriptures, so interpreted, seem to us clearly to express.

I. We regard the Scriptures as the records of God's successive relations to mankind, and particularly of the last and most perfect revelation of his will by Jesus Christ. Whatever doctrines seem to us to be clearly taught in the Scriptures, we receive without reserve or exception. We do not, however, attach equal importance to all the books in this collection. Our religion, we believe, lies chiefly in the New Testament. The dispensation of Moses, compared with that of Jesus, we consider as adapted to the childhood of the human race, a preparation for a nobler system, and chiefly useful now as serving to confirm and illustrate the Christian Scriptures. Jesus Christ is the only master of Christians, and whatever he taught, either during his personal ministry or by his inspired Apostles, we regard as of divine author-

ity, and profess to make the rule of our lives.

Our leading principle in interpreting Scripture is this, that the Bible is a book written for men, in the language of men, and that its meaning is to be sought in the same manner as that of other books. We believe that God, when He speaks to the human race, conforms, if we may so say, to the established rules of speaking and writing. How else would the Scriptures avail us more than if communicated in an unknown tongue?

Now all books and all conversation require in the reader or hearer the constant exercise of reason; for their true import is only to be obtained by continual comparison and inference. Human language, you well know, admits various interpretations; and every word and every sentence must be modified and explained according to the subject which is discussed, according to the purposes, feelings, circumstances, and principles of the writer, and according to the genius and idioms of the language which he uses. These are acknowledged principles in the interpretation of human writings; and a man whose words we should explain without reference to these principles would reproach us justly with a criminal want of candor, and an intention of obscuring or distorting his meaning.

Were the Bible written in a language and style of its own, did it consist of words which admit but a single sense, and of sentences wholly detached from each other, there would be no place for the principles now laid down. We could not reason about it as about other writings. But such a book would be of little worth; and perhaps, of all books, the Scriptures correspond least to this description. The word of God bears the stamp of the same hand which we see in his works. It has infinite connections and dependencies. Every proposition is linked with others, and is to be compared with others, that its full and precise import may be understood. Nothing stands alone. The New Testament is built on the Old. The Christian dispensation is a continuation of the Jewish, the completion of a vast scheme of providence, requiring great extent of view in the reader. Still more, the Bible treats of subjects on which we receive ideas from other

sources besides itself, — such subjects as the nature, passions, relations, and duties of man; and it expects us to restrain and modify its language by the known truths which observation and experience furnish on these topics.

We profess not to know a book which demands a more frequent exercise of reason than the Bible. In addition to the remarks now made on its infinite connections, we may observe, that its style nowhere affects the precision of science or the accuracy of definition. Its language is singularly glowing, bold, and figurative, demanding more frequent departures from the literal sense than that of our own age and country, and consequently demanding more continual exercise of judgment. We find, too, that the different portions of this book, instead of being confined to general truths, refer perpetually to the times when they were written, to states of society, to modes of thinking, to controversies in the church, to feelings and usages which have passed away, and without the knowledge of which we are constantly in danger of extending to all times and places what was of temporary and local application. We find, too, that some of these books are strongly marked by the genius and character of their respective writers, that the Holy Spirit did not so guide the Apostles as to suspend the peculiarities of their minds, and that a knowledge of their feelings, and of the influences under which they were placed, is one of the preparations for understanding their writings. With these views of the Bible, we feel it our bounden duty to exercise our reason upon it perpetually, to compare, to infer, to look beyond the letter to the spirit, to seek in the nature of the subject and the aim of the writer his true meaning; and, in general, to make use of what is known for explaining what is difficult, and for discovering new truths....

We do not announce these principles as original, or peculiar to ourselves. All Christians occasionally adopt them, not excepting those who most vehemently decry them when they happen to menace some favorite article of their creed. All Christians are compelled to use them in their controversies with infidels. All sects employ them in their war-

fare with one another. All willingly avail themselves of reason when it can be pressed into the service of their own party, and only complain of it when its weapons wound themselves. None reason more frequently than those from whom we differ. It is astonishing what a fabric they rear from a few slight hints about the fall of our first parents; and how ingeniously they extract from detached passages mysterious doctrines about the divine nature. We do not blame them for reasoning so abundantly, but for violating the fundamental rules of reasoning, for sacrificing the plain to the obscure, and the general strain of Scripture to a scanty number of insulated texts.

We object strongly to the contemptuous manner in which human reason is often spoken of by our adversaries, because it leads, we believe, to universal scepticism. If reason be so dreadfully darkened by the fall that its most decisive judgments on religion are unworthy of trust, then Christianity, and even natural theology, must be abandoned; for the existence and veracity of God, and the divine original of Christianity, are conclusions of reason, and must stand or fall with it. If revelation be at war with this faculty, it subverts itself, for the great question of its truth is left by God to be decided at the bar of reason. It is worthy of remark, how nearly the bigot and the sceptic approach. Both would annihilate our confidence in our faculties, and both throw doubt and confusion over truth. We honor revelation too highly to make it the antagonist of reason, or to believe that it calls us to renounce our highest powers....

To the views now given an objection is commonly urged from the character of God. We are told that God being infinitely wiser than men, his discoveries will surpass human reason. In a revelation from such a teacher we ought to expect propositions which we cannot reconcile with one another, and which may seem to contradict established truths; and it becomes us not to question or explain them away, but to believe and adore, and to submit our weak and carnal reason to the divine word. To this objection we have two short answers. We say, first, that it is

impossible that a teacher of infinite wisdom should expose those whom he would teach to infinite error. But if once we admit that propositions which in their literal sense appear plainly repugnant to one another, or to any known truth, are still to be literally understood and received, what possible limit can we set to the belief of contradictions? What shelter have we from the wildest fanaticism, which can always quote passages that, in their literal and obvious sense, give support to its extravagances? How can the Protestant escape from transubstantiation, a doctrine most clearly taught us, if the submission of reason, now contended for, be a duty? How can we even hold fast the truths of revelation; for if one apparent contradiction may be true, so may another, and the proposition, that Christianity is false, though involving inconsistency, may still be a verity?

We answer again, that if God be infinitely wise, He cannot sport with the understandings of his creatures. A wise teacher discovers his wisdom in adapting himself to the capacities of his pupils, not in perplexing them with what is unintelligible, not in distressing them with apparent contradictions, not in filling them with a sceptical distrust of their own powers. An infinitely wise teacher, who knows the precise extent of our minds and the best method of enlightening them, will surpass all other instructors in bringing down truth to our apprehension, and in showing its loveliness and harmony. We ought, indeed, to expect occasional obscurity in such a book as the Bible, which was written for past and future ages as well as for the present. But God's wisdom is a pledge that whatever is necessary for *us*, and necessary for salvation, is revealed too plainly to be mistaken, and too consistently to be questioned, by a sound and upright mind. It is not the mark of wisdom to use an unintelligible phraseology, to communicate what is above our capacities, to confuse and unsettle the intellect by appearances of contradiction. We honor our Heavenly Teacher too much to ascribe to him such a revelation. A revelation is a gift of light. It cannot thicken our darkness and multiply our perplexities.

II. Having thus stated the principles according to which we interpret Scripture, I now proceed to the second great head of this discourse, which is, to state some of the views which we derive from that sacred book, particularly those which distinguish us from other Christians.

1. In the first place, we believe in the doctrine of God's *UNITY*, or that there is one God, and one only. To this truth we give infinite importance, and we feel ourselves bound to take heed lest any man spoil us of it by vain philosophy. The proposition that there is one God seems to us exceedingly plain. We understand by it that there is one being, one mind, one person, one intelligent agent, and one only, to whom underived and infinite perfection and dominion belong. We conceive that these words could have conveyed no other meaning to the simple and uncultivated people who were set apart to be the depositaries of this great truth, and who were utterly incapable of understanding those hair-breadth distinctions between being and person which the sagacity of later ages has discovered. We find no intimation that this language was to be taken in an unusual sense, or that God's unity was a quite different thing from the oneness of other intelligent beings.

We object to the doctrine of the Trinity, that whilst acknowledging in words, it subverts in effect, the unity of God. According to this doctrine, there are three infinite and equal persons, possessing supreme divinity, called the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Each of these persons, as described by theologians, has his own particular consciousness, will, and perceptions. They love each other, converse with each other, and delight in each other's society. They perform different parts in man's redemption, each having his appropriate office, and neither doing the work of the other. The Son is mediator, and not the Father. The Father sends the Son, and is not himself sent; nor is He conscious, like the Son, of taking flesh. Here, then, we have three intelligent agents, possessed of different consciousness, different wills, and different perceptions, performing different acts, and sustaining different relations; and if these things do not imply and constitute



three minds or beings, we are utterly at a loss to know how three minds or beings are to be formed. It is difference of properties, and acts, and consciousness, which leads us to the belief of different intelligent beings, and, if this mark fails us, our whole knowledge falls; we have no proof that all the agents and persons in the universe are not one and the same mind. When we attempt to conceive of three Gods, we can do nothing more than represent to ourselves three agents, distinguished from each other by similar marks and peculiarities to those which separate the persons of the Trinity; and when common Christians hear these persons spoken of as conversing with each other, loving each other, and performing different acts, how can they help regarding them as different beings, different minds?

We do, then, with all earnestness, though without reproaching our brethren, protest against the irrational and unscriptural doctrine of the Trinity. "To us," as to the Apostle and the primitive Christians, "there is one God, even the Father." With Jesus, we worship the Father, as the only living and true God. We are astonished that any man can read the New Testament and avoid the conviction that the Father alone is God. We hear our Saviour continually appropriating this character to the Father. We find the Father continually distinguished from Jesus by this title. "God sent his Son." "God anointed Jesus." Now, how singular and inexplicable is this phraseology, which fills the New Testament, if this title belong equally to Jesus, and if a principal object of this book is to reveal him as God, as partaking equally with the Father in supreme divinity! We challenge our opponents to adduce one passage in the New Testament where the word God means three persons, where it is not limited to one person, and where, unless turned from its usual sense by the connection, it does not mean the Father. Can stronger proof be given that the doctrine of three persons in the God-head is not a fundamental doctrine of Christianity?...

We have another difficulty. Christianity, it must be remembered, was planted and grew up amidst sharp-sighted enemies, who over-

looked no objectionable part of the system, and who must have fastened with great earnestness on a doctrine involving such apparent contradictions as the Trinity. We cannot conceive an opinion against which the Jews, who prided themselves on an adherence to God's unity, would have raised an equal clamor. Now, how happens it that in the apostolic writings, which relate so much to objections against Christianity, and to the controversies which grew out of this religion, not one word is said implying that objections were brought against the gospel from the doctrine of the Trinity, not one word is uttered in its defense and explanation, not a word to rescue it from reproach and mistake? This argument has almost the force of demonstration. We are persuaded that, had three divine persons been announced by the first preachers of Christianity, all equal and all infinite, one of whom was the very Jesus who had lately died on the cross, this peculiarity of Christianity would have almost absorbed every other, and the great labor of the Apostles would have been to repel the continual assaults which it would have awakened. But the fact is, that not a whisper of objection to Christianity on that account reaches our ears from the apostolic age. In the Epistles we see not a trace of controversy called forth by the Trinity.

We have further objections to this doctrine, drawn from its practical influence. We regard it as unfavorable to devotion, by dividing and distracting the mind in its communion with God. It is a great excellence of the doctrine of God's unity, that it offers to us ONE OBJECT of supreme homage, adoration, and love, One Infinite Father, one Being of beings, one original and fountain, to whom we may refer all good, in whom all our powers and affections may be concentrated, and whose lovely and venerable nature may pervade all our thoughts. True piety, when directed to an undivided Deity, has a chasteness, a singleness, most favorable to religious awe and love. Now, the Trinity sets before us three distinct objects of supreme adoration; three infinite persons, having equal claims on our hearts; three divine agents, performing different offices, and to be acknowledged and

worshipped in different relations. And is it possible, we ask, that the weak and limited mind of man can attach itself to these with the same power and joy as to One Infinite Father, the only First Cause, in whom all the blessings of nature and redemption meet as their centre and source? Must not devotion be distracted by the equal and rival claims of three equal persons, and must not the worship of the conscientious, consistent Christian be disturbed by an apprehension lest he withhold from one or another of these his due proportion of homage!...

2. Having thus given our views of the unity of God, I proceed, in the second place, to observe that we believe in the unity of Jesus Christ. We believe that Jesus is one mind, one soul, one being, as truly one as we are, and equally distinct from the one God. We complain of the doctrine of the Trinity, that, not satisfied with making God three beings, it makes Jesus Christ two beings, and thus introduces infinite confusion into our conceptions of his character. This corruption of Christianity, alike repugnant to common sense and to the general strain of Scripture, is a remarkable proof of the power of a false philosophy in disfiguring the simple truth of Jesus.

According to this doctrine, Jesus Christ, instead of being one mind, one conscious, intelligent principle, whom we can understand, consists of two souls, two minds; the one divine, the other human; the one weak, the other almighty; the one ignorant, the other omniscient. Now we maintain that this is to make Christ two beings. To denominate him one person, one being, and yet to suppose him made up of two minds, infinitely different from each other, is to abuse and confound language, and to throw darkness over all our conceptions of intelligent natures. According to the common doctrine, each of these two minds in Christ has its own consciousness, its own will, its own perceptions. They have, in fact, no common properties. The divine mind feels none of the wants and sorrows of the human, and the human is infinitely removed from the perfection and happiness of the divine. Can you conceive of two beings in the universe

more distinct? We have always thought that one person was constituted and distinguished by one consciousness. The doctrine that one and the same person should have two consciousnesses, two wills, two souls, infinitely different from each other, this we think an enormous tax on human credulity.

We believe, then, that Christ is one mind, one being, and, I add, a being distinct from the one God. That Christ is not the one God, not the same being with the Father, is a necessary inference from our former head, in which we saw that the doctrine of three persons in God is a fiction. But on so important a subject I would add a few remarks. We wish that those from whom we differ would weigh one striking fact. Jesus, in his preaching, continually spoke of God. The word was always in his mouth. We ask, does he by this word ever mean himself? We say, never. On the contrary, he most plainly distinguishes between God and himself, and so do his disciples. How this is to be reconciled with the idea that the manifestation of Christ, as God, was a primary object of Christianity, our adversaries must determine.

If we examine the passages in which Jesus is distinguished from God, we shall see that they not only speak of him as another being, but seem to labor to express his inferiority. He is continually spoken of as the Son of God, sent of God, receiving all his powers from God, working miracles because God was with him, judging justly because God taught him, having claims on our belief because he was anointed and sealed by God, and as able of himself to do nothing. The New Testament is filled with this language. Now we ask what impression this language was fitted and intended to make? Could any who heard it have imagined that Jesus was the very God to whom he was so industriously declared to be inferior; the very Being by whom he was sent, and from whom he professed to have received his message and power? Let it here be remembered that the human birth, and bodily form, and humble circumstances, and mortal sufferings of Jesus, must all have prepared men to interpret, in the most un-

qualified manner, the language in which his inferiority to God was declared. . . .

I am aware that these remarks will be met by two or three texts in which Christ is called God, and by a class of passages, not very numerous, in which divine properties are said to be ascribed to him. To these we offer one plain answer. We say that it is one of the most established and obvious principles of criticism, that language is to be explained according to the known properties of the subject to which it is applied. Every man knows that the same words convey very different ideas when used in relation to different beings. Thus, Solomon *built* the temple in a different manner from the architect whom he employed; and God *repents* differently from man. Now we maintain that the known properties and circumstances of Christ, his birth, sufferings, and death, his constant habit of speaking of God as a distinct being from himself, his praying to God, his ascribing to God all his powers and offices — these acknowledged properties of Christ, we say, oblige us to interpret the comparatively few passages which are thought to make him the Supreme God, in a manner consistent with his distinct, and inferior nature. It is our duty to explain such texts by the rule which we apply to other texts, in which human beings are called gods; and are said to be partakers of the divine nature, to know and possess all things, and to be filled with all God's fullness. These latter passages we do not hesitate to modify, and restrain, and turn from the most obvious sense, because this sense is opposed to the known properties of the beings to whom they relate; and we maintain that we adhere to the same principle, and use no greater latitude, in explaining, as we do, the passages which are thought to support the Godhead of Christ.

Trinitarians profess to derive some important advantages from their mode of viewing Christ. It furnishes them, they tell us, with an infinite atonement, for it shows them an infinite being suffering for their sins. The confidence with which this fallacy is repeated astonishes us. When pressed with the question whether they really believe that the infinite and unchangeable God suffered and

died on the cross, they acknowledge that this is not true, but that Christ's human mind alone sustained the pains of death. How have we, then, an infinite sufferer? This language seems to us an imposition on common minds, and very derogatory to God's justice, as if this attribute could be satisfied by a sophism and a fiction.

3. Having thus given our belief on two great points, namely, that there is one God, and that Jesus Christ is a being distinct from and inferior to God, I now proceed to another point on which we lay still greater stress. We believe in the *moral perfection of God*. We consider no part of theology so important as that which treats of God's moral character; and we value our views of Christianity chiefly as they assert his amiable and venerable attributes.

It may be said that in regard to this subject all Christians agree, that all ascribe to the Supreme Being infinite justice, goodness, and holiness. We reply, that it is very possible to speak of God magnificently, and to think of him meanly; to apply to his person high-sounding epithets, and to his government principles which make him odious. The Heathens called Jupiter the greatest and the best; but his history was black with cruelty and lust. We cannot judge of men's real ideas of God by their general language, for in all ages they have hoped to soothe the Deity by adulation. We must inquire into their particular views of his purposes, of the principles of his administration, and of his disposition towards his creatures.

We conceive that Christians have generally leaned towards a very injurious view of the Supreme Being. They have too often felt as if He were raised, by his greatness and sovereignty, above the principles of morality, above those eternal laws of equity and rectitude to which all other beings are subjected. We believe that in no being is the sense of right so strong, so omnipotent, as in God. We believe that his almighty power is entirely submitted to his perceptions of rectitude; and this is the ground of our piety. It is not because He is our Creator merely, but because He created us for good and holy pur-

poses; it is not because his will is irresistible, but because his will is the perfection of virtue, that we pay him allegiance. We cannot bow before a being, however great and powerful, who governs tyrannically. We respect nothing but excellence, whether on earth or in heaven. We venerate not the loftiness of God's throne, but the equity and goodness in which it is established.

We believe that God is infinitely good, kind, benevolent, in the proper sense of these words — good in disposition as well as in act; good not to a few, but to all; good to every individual, as well as to the general system.

We believe, too, that God is just; but we never forget that his justice is the justice of a good being, dwelling in the same mind, and acting in harmony, with perfect benevolence. By this attribute we understand God's infinite regard to virtue or moral worth expressed in a moral government; that is, in giving excellent and equitable laws, and in conferring such rewards, and inflicting such punishments, as are best fitted to secure their observance. God's justice has for its end the highest virtue of the creation, and it punishes for this end alone; and thus it coincides with benevolence; for virtue and happiness, though not the same, are inseparable conjoined.

To give our views of God in one word, we believe in his parental character. We ascribe to him not only the name, but the dispositions and principles of a father. We believe that He has a father's concern for his creatures, a father's desire for their improvement, a father's equity in proportioning his commands to their powers, a father's joy in their progress, a father's readiness to receive the penitent, and a father's justice for the incorrigible. We look upon this world as a place of education, in which he is training men by prosperity and adversity, by aids and obstructions, by conflicts of reason and passion, by motives to duty and temptations to sin, by a various discipline suited to free and moral beings, for union with himself, and for a sublime and ever-growing virtue in heaven.

Now, we object to the systems of religion

which prevail among us, that they are adverse, in a greater or less degree, to these purifying, comforting, and honorable views of God; that they take from us our Father in heaven, and substitute for him a being whom we cannot love if we would, and whom we ought not to love if we could. We object, particularly on this ground, to that system which arrogates to itself the name of Orthodoxy, and which is now industriously propagated through our country. This system indeed takes various shapes, but in all it casts dishonor on the Creator. According to its old and genuine form, it teaches that God brings us into life wholly depraved, so that under the innocent features of our childhood is hidden a nature averse to all good and propense to all evil, a nature which exposes us to God's displeasure and wrath, even before we have acquired power to understand our duties or to reflect upon our actions. According to a more modern exposition, it teaches that we came from the hands of our Maker with such a constitution, and are placed under such influences and circumstances, as to render certain and infallible the total depravity of every human being from the first moment of his moral agency; and it also teaches that the offence of the child, who brings into life this ceaseless tendency to unmingled crime, exposes him to the sentence of everlasting damnation. Now, according to the plainest principles of morality, we maintain that a natural constitution of the mind, unfailingly disposing it to evil, and to evil alone, would absolve it from guilt; that to give existence under this condition would argue unspeakable cruelty; and that to punish the sin of this unhappily constituted child with endless ruin would be a wrong unparalleled by the most merciless despotism.

This system also teaches that God selects from this corrupt mass a number to be saved, and plucks them, by a special influence, from the common ruin; that the rest of mankind, though left without that special grace which their conversion requires, are commanded to repent, under penalty of aggravated woe; and that forgiveness is promised them on terms which their very constitution infallibly disposes them to reject, and in rejecting which

they awfully enhance the punishments of hell. These proffers of forgiveness and exhortations of amendment, to beings born under a blighting curse, fill our minds with a horror which we want words to express.

That this religious system does not produce all the effects on character which might be anticipated, we most joyfully admit. It is often, very often, counteracted by nature, conscience, common sense, by the general strain of Scripture, by the mild example and precepts of Christ, and by the many positive declarations of God's universal kindness and perfect equity. But still we think that we see its unhappy influence. It tends to discourage the timid, to give excuses to the bad, to feed the vanity of the fanatical, and to offer shelter to the bad feelings of the malignant. By shocking, as it does, the fundamental principles of morality, and by exhibiting a severe and partial Deity, it tends strongly to pervert the moral faculty, to form a gloomy, forbidding, and servile religion, and to lead men to substitute censoriousness, bitterness, and persecution, for a tender and impartial charity. We think, too, that this system, which begins with degrading human nature, may be expected to end in pride; for pride grows out of a consciousness of high distinctions, however obtained, and no distinction is so great as that which is made between the elected and abandoned of God.

4. Having thus spoken of the unity of God; of the unity of Jesus, and his inferiority to God; and of the perfections of the divine character; I now proceed to give our views of the mediation of Christ, and of the purposes of his mission. With regard to the great object which Jesus came to accomplish, there seems to be no possibility of mistake. We believe that he was sent by the Father to effect a moral or spiritual deliverance of mankind; that is, to rescue men from sin and its consequences, and to bring them to a state of everlasting purity and happiness. We believe, too, that he accomplishes this sublime purpose by a variety of methods — by his instructions respecting God's unity, parental character, and moral government, which are admirably fitted to reclaim the world from

idolatry and impiety, to the knowledge, love, and obedience of the Creator; by his promises of pardon to the penitent, and of divine assistance to those who labor for progress in moral excellence; by the light which he has thrown on the path of duty, by his own spotless example, in which the loveliness and sublimity of virtue shine forth to warm and quicken as well as guide us to perfection; by his threatenings against incorrigible guilt; by his glorious discoveries of immortality; by his sufferings and death; by that signal event, the resurrection, which powerfully bore witness to his divine mission, and brought down to men's senses, a future life; by his continual intercession, which obtains for us spiritual aid and blessings; and by the power with which he is invested of raising the dead, judging the world, and conferring the everlasting rewards promised to the faithful.

... The idea which is conveyed to common minds by the popular system, that Christ's death has an influence in making God placable or merciful, in awakening his kindness towards men, we reject with strong disapprobation. We are happy to find that this very dishonorable notion is disowned by intelligent Christians of that class from which we differ. We recollect, however, that, not long ago, it was common to hear of Christ as having died to appease God's wrath, and to pay the debt of sinners to his inflexible justice; and we have a strong persuasion that the language of popular religious books, and the common mode of stating the doctrine of Christ's mediation, still communicate very degrading views of God's character. They give to multitudes the impression that the death of Jesus produces a change in the mind of God towards man, and that in this its efficacy chiefly consists. No error seems to us more pernicious. We can endure no shade over the pure goodness of God. We earnestly maintain that Jesus, instead of calling forth, in any way or degree, the mercy of the Father, was sent by that mercy to be our Saviour; that he is nothing to the human race but what he is by God's appointment; that he communicates nothing but what God

empowers him to bestow; that our Father in heaven is originally, essentially, and eternally placable, and disposed to forgive; and that his unborrowed, underived, and unchangeable love is the only fountain of what flows to us through his Son. We conceive that Jesus is dishonored, not glorified, by ascribing to him an influence which clouds the splendor of divine benevolence.

We farther agree in rejecting, as unscriptural and absurd, the explanation given by the popular system of the manner in which Christ's death procures forgiveness for men. This system used to teach, as its fundamental principle, that man, having sinned against an infinite Being, has contracted infinite guilt, and is consequently exposed to an infinite penalty. We believe, however, that this reasoning, if reasoning it may be called, which overlooks the obvious maxim that the guilt of a being must be proportioned to his nature and powers, has fallen into disuse. Still the system teaches that sin, of whatever degree, exposes to endless punishment, and that the whole human race, being infallibly involved by their nature in sin, owe this awful penalty to the justice of their Creator. It teaches that this penalty cannot be remitted, in consistency with the honor of the divine law, unless a substitute be found to endure it or to suffer an equivalent. It also teaches that, from the nature of the case, no substitute is adequate to this work save the infinite God himself; and accordingly, God in his second person, took on him human nature, that He might pay to his own justice the debt of punishment incurred by men, and might thus reconcile forgiveness with the claims and threatenings of his law. Such is the prevalent system. Now, to us, this doctrine seems to carry on its front strong marks of absurdity; and we maintain that Christianity ought not to be encumbered with it, unless it be laid down in the New Testament fully and expressly. We ask our adversaries, then, to point to some plain passages where it is taught. We ask for one text in which we are told that God took human nature that He might make an infinite satisfaction to his own justice; for one text which tells us that human guilt requires

an infinite substitute; that Christ's sufferings owe their efficacy to their being borne by an infinite being; or that his divine nature gives infinite value to the sufferings of the human. Not *one word* of this description can we find in the Scriptures; not a text which even hints at these strange doctrines. They are altogether, we believe, the fictions of theologians.

5. Having thus stated our views of the highest object of Christ's mission, that it is the recovery of men to virtue, or holiness, I shall now, in the last place, give our views of the nature of Christian virtue, or true holiness. We believe that all virtue has its foundation in the moral nature of man, that is, in conscience, or his sense of duty, and in the power of forming his temper and life according to conscience. We believe that these moral faculties are the grounds of responsibility, and the highest distinctions of human nature, and that no act is praiseworthy any farther than it springs from their exertion. We believe that no dispositions infused into us without our own moral activity are of the nature of virtue, and therefore we reject the doctrine of irresistible divine influence on the human mind, moulding it into goodness as marble is hewn into a statue. Such goodness, if this word may be used, would not be the object of moral approbation, any more than the instinctive affections of inferior animals, or the constitutional amiableness of human beings.

By these remarks, we do not mean to deny the importance of God's aid or Spirit; but by his Spirit we mean a moral, illuminating, and persuasive influence, not physical, not compulsory, not involving a necessity of virtue. We object, strongly, to the idea of many Christians respecting man's impotence and God's irresistible agency on the heart, believing that they subvert our responsibility and the laws of our moral nature, that they make men machines, that they cast on God the blame of all evil deeds, that they discourage good minds, and inflate the fanatical with wild conceits of immediate and sensible inspiration.

Among the virtues, we give the first place to the love of God. We believe that this

principle is the true end and happiness of our being, that we were made for union with our Creator, that his infinite perfection is the only sufficient object and true resting-place for the insatiable desires and unlimited capacities of the human mind, and that, without him, our noblest sentiments, admiration, veneration, hope, and love would wither and decay. We believe, too, that the love of God is not only essential to happiness, but to the strength and perfection of all the virtues; that conscience, without the sanction of God's authority and retributive justice, would be a weak director, that benevolence, unless nourished by communion with his goodness, and encouraged by his smile, could not thrive amidst the selfishness and thanklessness of the world; and that self-government, without a sense of the divine inspection, would hardly extend beyond an outward and partial purity. God, as he is essentially goodness, holiness, justice, and virtue, so he is the life, motive, and sustainer of virtue in the human soul...

We conceive that the true love of God is a moral sentiment, founded on a clear perception, and consisting in a high esteem and veneration of his moral perfections. Thus, it perfectly coincides, and is, in fact, the same thing, with the love of virtue, rectitude, and goodness. You will easily judge, then, what we esteem the surest and only decisive signs of piety. We lay no stress on strong excitements. We esteem him, and him only, a pious man, who practically conforms to God's moral perfections and government; who shows his delight in God's benevolence by loving and serving his neighbor; his delight in God's justice by being resolutely upright; his sense of God's purity by regulating his thoughts, imagination, and desires; and whose conversation, business, and domestic life are swayed by a regard to God's presence and authority. In all things else men may deceive themselves. Disordered nerves may give them strange sights, and sounds, and impressions. Texts of Scripture may come to them as from heaven. Their whole souls may be moved, and their confidence in God's favor be undoubting. But in all this there is no religion. The question is, Do they love

God's commands, in which his character is fully expressed, and give up to these their habits and passions? Without this, ecstasy is a mockery. One surrender of desire to God's will is worth a thousand transports. We do not judge of the bent of men's minds by their raptures, any more than we judge of the natural direction of a tree during a storm. We rather suspect loud profession, for we have observed that deep feeling is generally noiseless, and least seeks display.

We would not, by these remarks, be understood as wishing to exclude from religion warmth, and even transport. We honor and highly value true religious sensibility...

Another important branch of virtue we believe to be love to Christ. The greatness of the work of Jesus, the spirit with which he executed it, and the sufferings which he bore for our salvation, we feel to be strong claims on our gratitude and veneration. We see in nature no beauty to be compared with the loveliness of his character, nor do we find on earth a benefactor to whom we owe an equal debt. We read his history with delight, and learn from it the perfection of our nature. We are particularly touched by his death, which was endured for our redemption, and by that strength of charity which triumphed over his pains. His resurrection is the foundation of our hope of immortality. His intercession gives us boldness to draw nigh to the throne of grace, and we look up to heaven with new desire when we think that, if we follow him here, we shall there see his benignant countenance, and enjoy his friendship forever.

I need not express to you our views on the subject of the benevolent virtues. We attach such importance to these, that we are sometimes reproached with exalting them above piety. We regard the spirit of love, charity, meekness, forgiveness, liberality, and beneficence, as the badge and distinction of Christians, as the brightest image we can bear of God, as the best proof of piety. On this subject I need not and cannot enlarge; but there is one branch of benevolence which I ought not to pass over in silence, because we think that we conceive of it more highly and justly than many of our brethren. I refer to



the duty of candor, charitable judgment, especially towards those who differ in religious opinion. We think that in nothing have Christians so widely departed from their religion as in this particular. We read with astonishment and horror the history of the church; and sometimes, when we look back on the fires of persecution, and on the zeal of Christians in building up walls of separation, and in giving up one another to perdition, we feel as if we were reading the records of an infernal rather than a heavenly kingdom. An enemy to every religion, if asked to describe a Christian, would, with some show of reason, depict him as an idolater of his own distinguishing opinions, covered with badges of party, shutting his eyes on the virtues and his ears on the arguments of his opponents, arrogating all excellence to his own sect and all saving power to his own creed, sheltering under the name of pious zeal the love of domination, the conceit of infallibility, and the spirit of intolerance, and trampling on men's rights under the pretence of saving their souls.

We can hardly conceive of a plainer obligation on beings of our frail and fallible nature, who are instructed in the duty of candid judgment, than to abstain from condemning men of apparent conscientiousness and sincerity, who are chargeable with no crime but that of differing from us in the interpretation of the Scriptures, and differing, too, on topics of great and acknowledged obscurity. We are astonished at the hardihood of those who, with Christ's warnings sounding in their ears, take on them the responsibility of making creeds for his church, and cast out professors of virtuous lives for imagined errors, for the guilt of thinking for themselves. We know that zeal for truth is the cover for this usurpation of Christ's prerogative; but we think that zeal for truth, as it is called, is very suspicious, except in men whose capacities and advantages, whose patient deliberation, and whose improvements in humility, mildness, and candor, give them a right to hope that their views are more just than those of their neighbors. Much of what passes for a zeal for truth we look upon with little respect, for it often appears to thrive most

luxuriantly where other virtues shoot up thinly and feebly, and we have no gratitude for those reformers who would force upon us a doctrine which has not sweetened their own tempers, or made them better men than their neighbors.

We are accustomed to think much of the difficulties attending religious inquiries — difficulties springing from the slow development of our minds, from the power of early impressions, from the state of society, from human authority, from the general neglect of the reasoning powers, from the want of just principles of criticism and of important helps in interpreting Scripture, and from various other causes. We find that on no subject have men, and even good men, ingrafted so many strange conceits, wild theories, and fictions of fancy, as on religion, and remembering, as we do, that we ourselves are sharers of the common frailty, we dare not assume infallibility in the treatment of our fellow-Christians, or encourage in common Christians, who have little time for investigation, the habit of denouncing and condemning other denominations, perhaps more enlightened and virtuous than their own. Charity, forbearance, a delight in the virtues of different sects, a backwardness to censure and condemn, these are virtues which, however poorly practised by us, we admire and recommend; and we would rather join ourselves to the church in which they abound than to any other communion, however elated with the belief of its own orthodoxy, however strict in guarding its creed, however burning with zeal against imagined error.

I have thus given the distinguishing views of those Christians in whose names I have spoken. We have embraced this system not hastily or lightly, but after much deliberation; and we hold it fast, not merely because we believe it to be true, but because we regard it as purifying truth, as a doctrine according to godliness, as able to "work mightily" and to "bring forth fruit" in them who believe. That we wish to spread it, we have no desire to conceal; but we think that we wish its diffusion because we regard it as more friendly to practical piety and pure morals than the opposite doctrines, because it gives clearer



and nobler views of duty, and stronger motives to its performance, because it recommends religion at once to the understanding and the heart, because it asserts the lovely and venerable attributes of God, because it tends to restore the benevolent spirit of Jesus to his divided and afflicted church, and be-

cause it cuts off every hope of God's favor except that which springs from practical conformity to the life and precepts of Christ. We see nothing in our views to give offence save their purity, and it is their purity which makes us seek and hope their extension through the world. . . .

## Theodore Parker

(1810-1860)

PARKER was the son of a Lexington farmer, and his grandfather was the captain of the Minute Men who fought the British on Lexington Common. His pride in the courage of his ancestors and what they had stood for became evident in later life as he took part in the anti-slavery movement. As a result of his activities in that cause he was said to have been next to Garrison the most hated man in New England. He was the most learned clergyman of his time, master of twenty languages, and at home in both American and European scholarship.

Like Channing, he was a Unitarian clergyman, and his theology was not unlike that of his elder colleague. There was the same stress on the righteousness of God and the worth of man, but reason for him was interpreted far more in terms of an inner intuition. In his rejection of the empirical philosophy he gave the clearest expression of Transcendentalism. He was not, however, a passive theologian. His sermons on slavery and on *The Perishing Classes in Boston* are moving indictments of injustice whether in the north or the south, and no movement of social protest failed to gain his support.

### TRANSCENDENTALISM<sup>1</sup>

. . . . .  
THIS is the problem of metaphysics, — to explain the facts of human consciousness. In metaphysics there are and have long been two schools of philosophers. The first is the sensational school. Its most important metaphysical doctrine is this: There is nothing in the intellect which was not first in the senses. Here "intellect" means the whole intellectual, moral, affectional and religious

consciousness of man. The philosophers of this school claim to have reached this conclusion legitimately by the inductive method. It was at first an hypothesis; but after analyzing the facts of consciousness, interrogating all the ideas and sentiments and sensations of man, they say the hypothesis is proved by the most careful induction. They appeal to it as a principle, as a maxim, from which other things are deduced. They say that

<sup>1</sup> *The World of Matter and the Spirit of Man.* Boston: 1907. Association.

Reprinted with the permission of the American Unitarian

experience by one or more of the senses is the ultimate appeal in philosophy: all that I know is of sensational origin; the senses are the windows which let in all the light I have; the senses afford a sensation. I reflect upon this, and by reflection transform a sensation into an idea. An idea, therefore, is a transformed sensation.

A school in metaphysics soon becomes a school in physics, in politics, ethics, religion. The sensational school has been long enough in existence to assert itself in each of the four great forms of human action. Let us see what it amounts to.

I. In physics. 1. It does not afford us a certainty of the existence of the outward world. The sensationalist believes it, not on account of his sensational philosophy, but in spite of it, not by his philosophy, but by his common sense: he does not philosophically know it. While I am awake the senses give me various sensations, and I refer the sensations to an object out of me, and so perceive its existence. But while I am asleep the senses give me various sensations, and for the time I refer the sensations to an object out of me, and so perceive its existence, — but when I awake it seems a dream. Now, if the senses deceive me in sleep, why not when awake? How can I *know* philosophically the existence of the material world? With only the sensational philosophy I cannot! I can only *know* the facts of consciousness. I cannot pass from ideas to things, from psychology to ontology. Indeed there is no ontology, and I am certain only of my own consciousness. Bishop Berkeley, a thorough sensationalist, comes up with the inductive method in his hand, and annihilates the outward material world, annihilates mankind, leaves me nothing but my own consciousness, and no consciousness of any certainty there.

II. In politics. Sensationalism knows nothing of absolute right, absolute justice; only of historical right, historical justice. "There is nothing in the intellect which was not first in the senses." The senses by which we learn of justice and right are hearing and seeing. Do I reflect, and so get a righter right and juster justice than I have seen or

heard of, it does me no good, for "nothing is in the intellect which was not in the senses." Thus absolute justice is only a whim, a no-thing, a dream. Men that talk of absolute justice, absolute right, are visionary men.

In politics, sensationalism knows nothing of ideas, only of facts; "the only lamp by which its feet are guided is the lamp of experience." All its facts are truths of observation, not of necessity. "There is no right but might," is the political philosophy of sensationalism. It may be the might of a king, of an aristocracy, of a democracy, the might of passions, the might of intellect, the might of muscle, — it has a right to what it will. It appeals always to human history, not human nature. Now human history shows what has been, not what should be or will be. To reason about war it looks not to the natural justice, only to the cost and present consequences. To reason about free trade or protection, it looks not to the natural justice or right of mankind, but only to the present expediency of the thing. Political expediency is the only right or justice it knows in its politics. So it always looks back, and says "it worked well at Barcelona or Venice," or "did not work well." It loves to cite precedents out of history, not laws out of nature. It claims a thing not as a human right, but as an historical privilege received by Magna Charta or the Constitution; as if a right were more of a right because time-honored and written on parchment; or less, because just claimed and for the first time and by a single man. The sensationalist has no confidence in ideas, so asks for facts to hold on to and to guide him in his blindness. Said a governor in America, "The right of suffrage is universal." "How can that be," said a sensationalist, "when the Constitution of the state declares that certain persons shall not vote?" He knew no rights before they became constitutional, no rights but vested rights — perhaps none but "invested."

III. In ethics. Ethics are the morals of the individual; politics of the mass. The sensationalist knows no first truth in morals,

the source of maxims in morals is experience; in experience there is no absolute right. Absolute justice, absolute right, were never in the senses, so not in the intellect; only whimsies, words in the mouth. The will is not free, but wholly conditioned, in bondage; character made always for you, not by you. The intellect is a smooth table; the moral power a smooth table; and experience writes there what she will, and what she writes is law of morality. Morality is expediency, nothing more; nothing is good of itself, right of itself, just of itself, — but only because it produces agreeable consequences, which are agreeable sensations. Dr. Paley is a good example of the sensational moralist. I ask him "What is right, just?" He says, "There are no such things; they are the names to stand for what works well in the long run." "How shall I know what to do in a matter of morals? by referring to a moral sense?" "Not at all: only by common sense, by observation, by experience, by learning what works well in the long run; by human history, not human nature. To make a complete code of morals by sensationalism you must take the history, not human nature. To make a complete code of morals by sensationalism you must take the history of mankind, and find what has worked well, and follow that because it worked well." "But human history only tells what has been and worked well, not what is right. I want what is right!" He answers, "It is pretty much the same thing." "But suppose the first men endowed with faculties perfectly developed, would they know what to do?" "Not at all. Instinct would tell the beast antecedent to experience, but man has no moral instinct, must learn only by actual trial." "Well," say I, "let alone that matter, let us come to details. What is honesty?" "It is the best policy." "Why must I tell the truth, keep my word, be chaste, temperate?" "For the sake of the reward, the respect of your fellows, the happiness of a long life and heaven at last. On the whole God pays well for virtue; though slow pay, he is sure." "But suppose the devil paid the better pay?" "Then serve him, for the end is not the service, but the pay. Virtue, and

by virtue I mean all moral excellence, is not a good in itself, but good as producing some other good." "Why should I be virtuous?" "For the sake of the reward." "But vice has its rewards, they are present and not future, immediate and certain, not merely contingent and mediate. I should think them greater than the reward of virtue." Then vice to you is virtue, for it pays best. The sensational philosophy knows no conscience to sound in the man's ears the stern word, Thou oughtest so to do, come what will come!

In politics might makes right, so in morals. Success is the touchstone; the might of obtaining the reward the right of doing the deed. Bentham represents the sensational morals of politics; Paley of ethics. Both are Epicureans. The sensationalist and the Epicurean agree in this, — enjoyment is the touchstone of virtue and determines what is good, what bad, what indifferent: this is the generic agreement. Heathen Epicurus spoke only of enjoyment in this life; Christian Archdeacon Paley — and a very *arch* deacon — spoke of enjoyment also in the next: this is the specific difference. In either case virtue ceases to be virtue, for it is only a bargain.

IV. In religion. Sensationalism must have a philosophy of religion, a theology; let us see what theology. There are two parties; one goes by philosophy, the other mistrusts philosophy.

1. The first thing in theology is to know God. The idea of God is the touchstone of a theologian. Now to know the existence of God is to be certain thereof as of my own existence. "Nothing in the intellect which was not first in the senses," says sensationalism; "all comes by sensational experience and reflection thereon." Sensationalism — does that give us the idea of God? I ask the sensationalist, "Does the sensational eye see God?" "No." "The ear hear him?" "No." "Do the organs of sense touch or taste him?" "No." "How then do you get the idea of God?" "By induction from facts of observation *a posteriori*. The senses deal with finite things; I reflect on them, put them all together I assume that they have *cause*;

then by the inductive method I find out the character of that cause: that is God." Then I say, "But the senses deal with only finite things, so you must infer only a finite maker, else the induction is imperfect. So you have but a finite God. Then these finite things, measured only by my experience, are imperfect things. Look at disorders in the frame of nature; the sufferings of animals, the miseries of men; here are seeming imperfections which the sensational philosopher staggers at. But to go on with this induction: from an imperfect work you must infer an imperfect author. So the God of sensationalism is not only finite, but imperfect even at that. But am I certain of the existence of the finite and imperfect God? The existence of the outward world is only an hypothesis, its laws hypothetical; all that depends on that or them is but an hypothesis — the truth of your faculties, the forms of matter only an hypothesis: so the existence of God is not a certainty; he is but our hypothetical God. But a hypothetical God is no God at all, not the living God: an imperfect God is no God at all, not the true God: a finite God is no God at all, not the absolute God. But this hypothetical, finite, imperfect God, where is he? In matter? No. In spirit? No. Does he act in matter or spirit? No, only now and then he did act by miracle; he is outside of the world of matter and spirit. Then he is a non-resident, an absentee. A non-resident God is no God at all, not the all-present God."

The above is the theory on which Mr. Hume constructs his notion of God with the sensational philosophy, the inductive method; and he arrives at the hypothesis of a God, of a finite God, of an imperfect God, of a non-resident God. Beyond that the sensational philosophy as philosophy cannot go.

But another party comes out of the same school to treat of religious matters; they give their philosophy a vacation, and to prove the existence of God they go back to tradition, and say, "Once God revealed himself to the senses of men; they heard him, they saw him, they felt him; so to them the existence of God was not an induction, but a fact of observation; they told it to others,

through whom it comes to us; we can say it is not a fact of observation but a fact of testimony."

"Well," I ask, "are you certain then?" "Yes." "Quite sure? Let me look. The man to whom God revealed himself may have been mistaken; it may have been a dream, or a whim of his own, perhaps a fib; at any rate, he was not philosophically certain of the existence of the outward world in general; how could he be of anything that took place in it? Next, the evidence which relates the transaction is not wholly reliable: how do I know the books which tell of it tell the truth, that they were not fabricated to deceive me? All that rests on testimony is a little uncertain if it took place one or two thousand years ago; especially if I know nothing about the persons who testify or of that whereof they testify; still more so if it be a thing, as you say, unphilosophical and even supernatural."

So, then, the men who give a vacation to their philosophy have slurred the philosophical argument for a historical, the theological for the mythological, and have gained nothing except the tradition of God. By this process we are as far from the infinite God as before, and have only arrived at the same point where the philosophy left us.

The English Deists and the Socinians and others have approached religion with the sensational philosophy in their hands; we are to learn of God philosophically only by induction. And such is their God. They tell us that God is not knowable; the existence of God is not a certainty to us; it is a probability, a credibility, a possibility — a certainty to none. You ask of sensationalism, the greatest question, "Is there a God?" Answer: "Probably." "What is his character?" "Finite, imperfect." "Can we trust him?" "If we consult tradition it is creditable; if philosophy, possible."

This is the philosophy of sensationalism; such its doctrine in physics, politics, ethics, religion. It leads to boundless uncertainty. Berkeley resolves the universe into subjective ideas; no sensationalist knows a law in physics to be universal. Hobbes and Bentham

and Condillac in politics know of no right but might; Priestley denies the spirituality of man, Collins and Edwards his liberty; Dodwell affirms the materiality of the soul, and the mortality of all men not baptized; Mandeville directly, and others indirectly, deny all natural distinction between virtue and vice; Archdeacon Paley knows no motive but expediency.

The materialist is puzzled with the existence of matter; finds its laws general, not universal. The sensational philosophy meets the politician and tells him through Rousseau and others, "Society has no divine original, only the social compact; there is no natural justice, natural right; no right, but might; no greater good than the greatest good of the greatest number, and for that you may sacrifice all you will, to defend a constitution is better than to defend justice." In morals the sensational philosophy meets the young man and tells him all is uncertain; he had better be content with things as they are, himself as he is; to protest against a popular wrong is foolish, to make money by it, or ease, or power, is a part of wisdom; only the fool is wise above what is written. It meets the young minister with its proposition that the existence of God is not a certainty, nor the immortality of the soul; that religion is only traditions of the elders and the keeping of a form. It says to him, "Look there, Dr. Humdrum has got the tallest pulpit and the quietest pews, the fattest living and cosiest nook in all the land; how do you think he won it? Why, by letting well-enough alone; he never meddles with sin; it would break his heart to hurt a sinner's feelings — he might lose a parishioner; he never dreams to make the world better, or better off. Go thou and do likewise."

I come now to the other school. This is distinguished by its chief metaphysical doctrine, that there is in the intellect (or consciousness), something that never was in the senses, to wit, the intellect (or consciousness) itself; that man has faculties which transcend the senses; faculties which give him ideas and intuitions that transcend sensational experience; ideas whose origin is not from sensation, nor their proof from sensation.

This is the transcendental school. They maintain that the mind (meaning thereby all which is not sense) is not a smooth tablet on which sensation writes its experience, but is a living principle which of itself originates ideas when the senses present the occasion, that, as there is a body with certain senses, so there is a soul or mind with certain powers which give the man sentiments and ideas. This school maintains that it is a fact of consciousness itself that there is in the intellect somewhat that was not first in the senses; and also that they have analyzed consciousness, and by the inductive method established the conclusion that there is a consciousness that never was sensation, never could be; that our knowledge is in part *a priori*; that we know, 1, certain truths of necessity, 2, certain truths of intuition, or spontaneous consciousness; 3, certain truths of demonstration, a voluntary consciousness; all of these truths not dependent on sensation for cause, origin, or proof. Facts of observation, sensational experience, it has in common with the other school.

Transcendentalism, also, reports itself in the four great departments of human activity — in physics, politics, ethics, religion.

I. In physics it starts with the maxim that the senses acquaint us actually with body, and therefrom the mind gives us the idea of substance, answering to an objective reality. Thus is the certainty of the material world made sure of. Then *a priori* it admits the uniformity of the action of nature; and its laws are *a priori* known to be universal, and not general alone. These two doctrines it finds as maxims resulting from the nature of man, facts given. Then it sets out with other maxims, first truths, which are facts of necessity, known to be such without experience. All the first truths of mathematics are of this character, e.g., that the whole is greater than a part. From these, by the deductive method, it comes at other facts — facts of demonstration; these also are transcendental, that is, transcend the senses, transcend the facts of observation. For example, the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles — that is universally true; it is a fact of demonstration, and is a

deduction from a first truth which is self-evident, a fact of necessity. But here the fact of demonstration transcends the fact of experience, philosophy is truer than sensation. The whole matter of geometry is transcendental.

II. In politics, transcendentalism starts not from experience alone, but from consciousness; not merely from human history, but also from human nature. It does not so much quote precedents, contingent facts of experience, as ideas, necessary facts of consciousness. It only quotes the precedent to obtain or illustrate the idea. It appeals to a natural justice, natural right; absolute justice, absolute right. Now the source and original of this justice and right it finds in God — the conscience of God; the channel through which we receive this justice and right is our own moral sense, our conscience, which is our consciousness of the conscience of God. This conscience in politics and in ethics transcends experience, and *a priori* tells us of the just, the right, the good, the fair; not the relatively right alone, but absolute right also. As it transcends experience, so it anticipates history; and the ideal justice of conscience is juster than the empirical and contingent justice actually exercised at Washington or at Athens, as the ideal circle is rounder than one the stone-cutter scratches on his rough seal. In transcendental politics the question of expediency is always subordinate to the question of natural right; it asks not merely about the cost of a war, but its natural justice. It aims to organize the ideals of man's moral and social nature into political institutions; to have a government which shall completely represent the facts of man's social consciousness so far as his nature is now developed. But as this development is progressive, so must government be; yet not progressive by revolution, by violence; but by harmonious development, progressive by growth. The transcendental politician does not merely interpret history, and look back to Magna Charta and the Constitution; but into human nature, through to divine nature; and so anticipates history, and in man and God finds the origin and primary source of all

just policy, all right legislation. So looking he transcends history.

III. In ethics. Transcendentalism affirms that man has moral faculties which lead him to justice and right, and by his own nature can find out what is right and just, and can know it and be certain of it. Right is to be done come what will come. I am not answerable for the consequences of doing right, only of not doing it, only of doing wrong. The conscience of each man is to him the moral standard; so to mankind is the conscience of the race. In morals conscience is complete and reliable as the eye for colors, the ear for sounds, the touch and taste for their purposes. While experience shows what has been or is, conscience shows what should be and shall.

Transcendental ethics look not to the consequences of virtue, in this life or the next, as motive, therefore, to lead men to virtue. That is itself a good, an absolute good, to be loved not for what it brings, but is. It represents the even poise or balance-point between individual and social development. To know what is right, I need not ask what is the current practice, what say the Revised Statutes, what said holy men of old, but what says conscience? What, God? The common practice, the Revised Statutes, the holy men of old are helps, not masters. I am to be co-ordinate with justice.

Conscience transcends experience, and not only explains but anticipates that, and the transcendental system of morals is to be founded on human nature and absolute justice.

I am to respect my own nature and be an individual man — your nature and be a social man. Truth is to be told and asked, justice done and demanded, right claimed and allowed, affection felt and received. The will of man is free; not absolutely free as God's, but partially free, and capable of progress to yet higher degrees of freedom.

Do you ask an example of a transcendental moralist? A scheme of morals was once taught to mankind wholly transcendental, the only such scheme that I know. In that was no alloy of expediency, no deference to

experience, no crouching behind a fact of human history to hide from ideas of human nature, a scheme of morals which demands that you be you — I, I; balances individualism and socialism on the central point of justice; which puts natural right, natural duty, before all institutions, all laws, all traditions. You will pardon me for mentioning the name of Jesus of Nazareth in a lecture. But the whole of human history did not justify his ethics; only human nature did that. Hebrew ethics, faulty in detail, were worse in method and principle, referring all to an outward command, not an inward law. Heathen ethics less faulty in detail, not less in principles, referred all to experience and expediency, knew only what was, and what worked well here or there; not what ought to be, and worked well anywhere and forever. He transcended that, taught what should be, must, shall, and forever.

The danger is that the transcendental moralist shall too much abhor the actual rules of morality; where much is bad and ill-founded, shall deem all worthless. Danger, too, that he take a transient impulse, personal and fugitive, for a universal law; follow a passion for a principle, and come to naught; surrender his manhood, his free will to his unreflecting instinct, become subordinate thereto. Men that are transcendental-mad we have all seen in morals; to be transcendental-wise, sober, is another thing. The notion that every impulse is to be followed, every instinct totally obeyed, will put man among the beasts, not angels.

IV. In religion. Transcendentalism admits a religious faculty, element, or nature in man, as it admits a moral, intellectual and sensational faculty — that man by nature is a religious being as well as moral, intellectual, sensational; that this religious faculty is adequate to its purposes and wants, as much so as the others, as the eye acquainting us with light; and that this faculty is the source of religious emotions, of the sentiments of adoration, worship. Through this we have consciousness of God as through the senses consciousness of matter. In connection with reason it gives us the primary ideas of religion, ideas which transcend experience.

Now the transcendental philosophy legitimates the ideas of religion by reference to human nature. Some of them it finds truths of necessity, which cannot be conceived of as false or unreal without violence to reason; some it finds are truths of consciousness — of spontaneous consciousness, or intuition, some, truths of voluntary consciousness, or demonstration, inductive or deductive. Such ideas, capable of this legitimation, transcend experience, require and admit no further proof; as true before experience as after, true before time, after time, eternally; absolutely true. On that rock transcendentalism founds religion, sees its foundation, and doubts no more of religious truths than of the truths of mathematics. All the truths of religion it finds can be verified in consciousness today, what cannot is not religion. But it does not neglect experience. In human history it finds confirmations, illustrations, of the ideas of human nature, for history represents the attempt of mankind to develop human nature. So then as transcendentalism in philosophy legitimates religion by a reference to truths of necessity, to truths of consciousness, it illustrates religion by facts of observation, facts of testimony.

By sensationalism religious faith is a belief, more or less strange, in a probability, a credibility, a possibility. By transcendentalism religious faith is the normal action of the whole spiritual nature of man, which gives him certain knowledge of a certainty not yet attainable by experience; where understanding ends, faith begins, and out-travels the understanding. Religion is natural to man, is justice, piety — free justice, free piety, free thought. The form thereof should fit the individual; hence there will be a unity of substance, diversity of form. So a transcendental religion demands a transcendental theology.

1. The transcendental philosophy appears in its doctrine of God. The idea of God is a fact given in the consciousness of man; consciousness of the infinite is the condition of a consciousness of the finite. I learn of a finite thing by sensation, I get an idea thereof; at the same time the idea of the infinite unfolds in me. I am not conscious of my own ex-



istence except as a finite existence, that is, as a dependent existence; and the idea of the infinite, of God on whom I depend, comes at the same time as the logical correlative of a knowledge of myself. So the existence of God is a certainty; I am as certain of that as of my own existence. Indeed without that knowledge I know nothing. Of this I am certain — I am; but of this as certain — God is; for if I am, and am finite and dependent, then this presupposes the infinite and independent. So the idea of God is *a priori*; rests on facts of necessity, on facts of consciousness.

Then transcendentalism uses the other mode, the *a posteriori*. Starting with the infinite, it finds signs and proofs of him everywhere, and gains evidence of God's existence in the limits of sensational observation; the thing refers to its maker, the thought to the mind, the effect to the cause, the created to the creator, the finite to the infinite; at the end of my arms are two major prophets, ten minor prophets, each of them pointing the transcendental philosopher to the infinite God, of which he has consciousness without the logical process of induction.

Then the character of God as given in the idea of him, given in consciousness — that represents God as a being, not with the limitations of impersonality (that is to confound God with matter); not with the limitations of personality (that confounds him with man); but God with no limitations, infinite, absolute; looked at from sensation, infinite power, from thought, infinite intellect; from the moral sense, infinite conscience, from the emotional, infinite affection; from the religious, infinite soul; from all truth, the whole human nature names him Infinite Father!

God is immanent in matter, so it is; immanent in spirit, so it is. He acts also as God in matter and spirit, acts perfectly; laws of matter or of spirit are modes of God's acting, being; as God is perfect, so the mode of his action is perfect and unchangeable. Therefore, as God is ever in matter and spirit, and where God is is wholly God active, so no intervention is possible. God cannot come where he already is, so no miracle is possible. A miracle *a parte humaná* is a viola-

tion of what is a law to man; a miracle to God — *a parte diviná* — is a violation of what is law to God; the most extraordinary things that have been seem miracles *a parte humaná* — laws, *a parte diviná*. But though God is immanent in matter and in spirit, he yet transcends both matter and spirit, has no limitations. Indeed all perfection of immanence and transcendence belong to him — the perfection of existence, infinite being; the perfection of space, immensity; the perfection of time, eternity; of power, all-mightiness; of mind, all-knowingness; of affection, all-lovingness; of will, absolute freedom, absolute justice, absolute right. His providence is not merely general, but universal, so special in each thing. Hence the universe partakes of his perfection, is a perfect universe for the end he made it for.

2. The doctrine of the soul. This teaches that man by nature is immortal. This doctrine it legitimates: 1. By reference to facts of consciousness that men feel in general; in the heart it finds the longing after immortality, in the mind the idea of immortality, in religious consciousness the faith in immortality, in human nature altogether the strong confidence and continued trust therein. 2. It refers also to the nature of God, and reasons thus: God is all-powerful and can do the best; all-wise, and can know it; all-good, and must will it; immortality is the best, therefore it is. All this anticipates experience *a priori*. 3. It refers to the general arrangements of the world, where everything gets ripe, matures, but man. In the history of mankind it finds confirmation of this doctrine, for every rude race and all civilized tribes have been certain of immortality; but here and there are men, sad and unfortunate, who have not by the mind legitimated the facts of spontaneous consciousness, whose nature the sensational philosophy has made blind, and they doubt or deny what nature spontaneously affirms.

The nature of God being such, he immanent and active in matter and spirit; the nature of man such, so provided with faculties to love the true, the just, the fair, the good — it follows that man is capable of inspiration from God, communion with God; not in

raptures, not by miracle but by the sober use of all his faculties, moral, intellectual, affectional, religious. The condition thereof is this, the faithful use of human nature, the coincidence of man's will with God's. Inspiration is proportionate to the man's quantity of being, made up of a constant and a variable, his quantity of gifts, his quantity of faithful use. In this way transcendentalism can legitimate the highest inspiration, and explain the genius of God's noblest son, not as monstrous, but natural. In religion as in all things else there has been a progressive development of mankind. The world is a school, prophets, saints, saviours, men more eminently gifted and faithful, and so most eminently inspired — they are the schoolmasters to lead men up to God.

There is danger in this matter also lest the transcendental religionist should despise the past and its sober teachings, should take a fancy personal and fugitive for a fact of universal consciousness, embrace a cloud for an angel, and miserably perish. It is not for man to transcend his faculties, to be above himself, above reason, conscience, affection, religious trust. It is easy to turn off from these and be out of reason, conscience, affection, religion — beside himself. Madmen in religion are not rare, enthusiasts, fanatics.

The sensational philosophy, with all its evils, has done the world a great service. It has stood up for the body, for common sense, protested against spiritual tyranny, against the spiritualism of the middle ages which thought the senses wicked and the material world profane. To sensationalism we are indebted for the great advance of mankind in physical science, in discovery, arts, mechanics, and for many improvements in government. Some of its men are great names — Bacon, Locke, Newton. Let us do them no dishonor; they saw what they could, told it; they saw not all things that are, saw some which are not. In our day no one of them would be content with the philosophy they all agreed in then. Hobbes and Hume have done us service; the Socinians, Priestley, Collins, Berkeley, Dodwell, Mandeville, Edwards. To take the good and leave the ill is our part; but the doubts which this philoso-

phy raises, the doubt of Hume, the doubt of Hobbes, of the English Deists in general, do not get answered by this philosophy. For this we have weapons forged by other hands, tempered in another spring.

Transcendentalism has a work to do, to show that physics, politics, ethics, religion rest on facts of necessity, facts of intuition, facts of demonstration, and have their witness and confirmation in facts of observation. It is the work of transcendentalism to give us politics which represent God's thought of a state, — the whole world, each man free; to give us morals which leave the man a complete individual, no chord rent from the human harp — yet complete in his social character, no string discordant in the social choir; to give us religion worthy of God and man, — free goodness, free piety, free thought. That is not to be done by talking at random, not by idleness, not by railing at authority, calumniating the past or the present; not by idle brains with open mouth, who outrage common sense; but by diligent toil, brave discipline, patience to wait, patience to work. Nothing comes of nothing, foolishness of fools; but something from something, wise thought from thinking men; and of the wise thought comes a lovely deed, life, laws, institutions for mankind.

The problem of transcendental philosophy is no less than this, to revise the experience of mankind and try its teachings by the nature of mankind; to test ethics by conscience, science by reason; to try the creeds of the churches; the constitutions of the states by the constitution of the universe; to reverse what is wrong, supply what is wanting, and command the just. To do this in a nation like ours, blinded still by the sensational philosophy, devoted chiefly to material interests, its politics guided by the madness of party more than sober reason; to do this in a race like the Anglo-Saxon, which has an obstinate leaning to a sensational philosophy, which loves facts of experience, not ideas of consciousness, and believes not in the First-Fair, First-Perfect, First-Good, is no light work; not to be taken in hand by such as cannot bear the strife of tongues, the toil, the heat, the war of thought; not to be ac-

complished by a single man, however well-born and well-bred; not by a single age and race. It has little of history behind, for this philosophy is young. It looks to a future, a future to be made; a church whose creed is truth, whose worship love; a society full of industry and abundance, full of wisdom, virtue, and the poetry of life; a state with unity among all, with freedom for each; a church

without tyranny, a society without ignorance, want, or crime, a state without oppression; yes, a world with no war among the nations to consume the work of their hands, and no restrictive policy to hinder the welfare of mankind. That is the human dream of the transcendental philosophy. Shall it ever become a fact? History says, No; human nature says, Yes.

# Ralph Waldo Emerson

## (1803-1882)

AFTER his graduation from Harvard in 1821, Emerson taught school for a short time. He attended Harvard Divinity School, was ordained in the Unitarian denomination, and in 1829 became minister of the Old North Church in Boston. That same year he married Ellen Tucker who only lived until 1831. Having come to question the justification of the Lord's Supper, he resigned from his church in 1832 and settled in Concord where he lived the rest of his life. He remarried in 1835 and had three children, the eldest of whom, Waldo, died at the age of six. Except for three trips to Europe, during the first of which he came to know Carlyle, the only significant events of his later life were the publication of his addresses and essays. In 1836 *Nature* was published, followed by the *American Scholar Address* in 1837, *The Divinity School Address* in 1838, *Essays — First Series* in 1841, *Essays — Second Series* in 1844, *Representative Men* in 1850, *Conduct of Life* in 1860, and *Society and Solitude* in 1870.

## NATURE<sup>1</sup>

### LANGUAGE

. . . . .  
WE ARE thus assisted by natural objects in the expression of particular meanings. But how great a language to convey such peppercorn informations! Did it need such noble races of creatures, this profusion of forms, this host of orbs in heaven, to furnish man with the dictionary and grammar of his municipal speech? Whilst we use this grand cipher to expedite the affairs of our pot and kettle, we feel that we have not yet put it to its use, neither are able. We are like travel-

ers using the cinders of a volcano to roast their eggs. Whilst we see that it always stands ready to clothe what we would say, we cannot avoid the question whether the characters are not significant for themselves. Have mountains, and waves, and skies, no significance but what we consciously give them when we employ them as emblems of our thoughts? The world is emblematic. Parts of speech are metaphors, because the whole of nature is a metaphor of the human mind. The laws of moral nature answer to those of matter as face to face in a glass. "The visible world and the relation of its parts, is the dial

<sup>1</sup> *Nature, Addresses and Lectures*, vol. 1, pp. 32-52, 55-68, 69-77. Centenary Edition. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1904.

plate of the invisible." The axioms of physics translate the laws of ethics. Thus, "the whole is greater than its part"; "Reaction is equal to action"; "the smallest weight may be made to lift the greatest, the difference of weight being compensated by time", and many the like propositions, which have an ethical as well as physical sense. These propositions have a much more extensive and universal sense when applied to human life, than when confined to technical use.

In like manner, the memorable words of history and the proverbs of nations consist usually of a natural fact, selected as a picture or parable of a moral truth. Thus, A rolling stone gathers no moss; A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush; A cripple in the right way will beat a racer in the wrong; Make hay while the sun shines; 'Tis hard to carry a full cup even; Vinegar is the son of wine; The last ounce broke the camel's back; Long-lived trees make roots first; — and the like. In their primary sense these are trivial facts, but we repeat them for the value of their analogical import. What is true of proverbs, is true of all fables, parables, and allegories.

This relation between the mind and matter is not fancied by some poet, but stands in the will of God, and so is free to be known by all men. It appears to men, or it does not appear. When in fortunate hours we ponder this miracle, the wise man doubts if at all other times he is not blind and deaf;

Can such things be,  
And overcome us like a summer's cloud,  
Without our special wonder?

for the universe becomes transparent, and the light of higher laws than its own shines through it. It is the standing problem which has exercised the wonder and the study of every fine genius since the world began; from the era of the Egyptians and the Brahmins to that of Pythagoras, of Plato, of Bacon, of Leibnitz, of Swedenborg. There sits the Sphinx at the roadside, and from the age to age, as each prophet comes by, he tries his fortune at reading her riddle. There seems to be a necessity in spirit to manifest itself in material forms; and day and night, river and

storm, beast and bird, acid and alkali, pre-exist in necessary Ideas in the mind of God, and are what they are by virtue of preceding affections in the world of spirit. A Fact is the end or last issue of spirit. The visible creation is the terminus or the circumference of the invisible world. "Material objects," said a French philosopher, "are necessarily kinds of *scoriae* of the substantial thoughts of the Creator, which must always preserve an exact relation to their first origin, in other words, visible nature must have a spiritual and moral side."

This doctrine is abstruse, and though the images of "garment," "scoriae," "mirror," etc., may stimulate the fancy, we must summon the aid of subtler and more vital expositors to make it plain. "Every scripture is to be interpreted by the same spirit which gave it forth" — is the fundamental law of criticism. A life in harmony with Nature, the love of truth and of virtue, will purge the eyes to understand her text. By degrees we may come to know the primitive sense of the permanent objects of nature, so that the world shall be to us an open book, and every form significant of its hidden life and final cause.

A new interest surprises us, whilst, under the view now suggested, we contemplate the fearful extent and multitude of objects; since "every object rightly seen, unlocks a new faculty of the soul." That which was unconscious truth, becomes, when interpreted and defined in an object, a part of the domain of knowledge — a new weapon in the magazine of power.

## V. DISCIPLINE

In view of the significance of nature, we arrive at once at a new fact, that nature is a discipline. This use of the world includes the preceding uses, as parts of itself.

Space, time, society, labor, climate, food, locomotion, the animals, the mechanical forces, give us sincerest lessons, day by day, whose meaning is unlimited. They educate both the Understanding and the Reason. Every property of matter is a school for the understanding — its solidity or resistance, its inertia, its extension, its figure, its divisi-

bility. The understanding adds, divides, combines, measures, and finds nutriment and room for its activity in this worthy scene. Meantime, Reason transfers all these lessons into its own world of thought, by perceiving the analogy that marries Matter and Mind.

1. Nature is a discipline of the understanding in intellectual truths. Our dealing with sensible objects is a constant exercise in the necessary lessons of difference, of likeness, of order, of being and seeming, of progressive arrangement; of ascent from particular to general; of combination to one end of manifold forces. Proportioned to the importance of the organ to be formed, is the extreme care with which its tuition is provided — a care pretermitted in no single case. What tedious training, day after day, year after year, never ending, to form the common sense; what continual reproduction of annoyances, inconveniences, dilemmas; what rejoicing over us of little men; what disputing of prices, what reckonings of interest — and all to form the Hand of the mind, — to instruct us that “good thoughts are no better than good dreams, unless they be executed!”

The same good office is performed by Property and its filial systems of debt and credit. Debt, grinding debt, whose iron face the widow, the orphan, and the sons of genius fear and hate; — debt, which consumes so much time, which so cripples and disheartens a great spirit with cares that seem so base, is a preceptor whose lessons cannot be foregone, and is needed most by those who suffer from it most. Moreover, property which has been well compared to snow — “if it fall level today, it will be blown into drifts tomorrow” — is the surface action of internal machinery, like the index on the face of a clock. Whilst now it is the gymnastics of the understanding, it is hiving, in the foresight of the spirit, experience in profounder laws.

The whole character and fortune of the individual are affected by the least inequalities in the culture of the understanding; for example, in the perception of differences. Therefore is Space, and therefore Time, that man may know that things are not huddled and lumped, but sundered and individual. A bell and a plow have each their use, and

neither can do the office of the other. Water is good to drink, coal to burn, wool to wear; but wool cannot be drunk, nor water spun, nor coal eaten. The wise man shows his wisdom in separation, in gradation, and his scale of creatures and of merits is as wide as nature. The foolish have no range in their scale, but suppose every man is as every other man. What is not good they call the worst, and what is not hateful, they call the best.

In like manner, what good heed Nature forms in us! She pardons no mistakes. Her yea is yea, and her nay, nay.

The first steps in Agriculture, Astronomy, Zoölogy (those first steps which the farmer, the hunter, and the sailor take), teach that Nature's dice are always loaded; that in her heaps and rubbish are concealed sure and useful results.

How calmly and genially the mind apprehends one after another the laws of physics! What noble emotions dilate the mortal as he enters into the councils of the creation, and feels by knowledge the privilege to Be! His insight refines him. The beauty of nature shines in his own breast. Man is greater that he can see this, and the universe less, because Time and Space relations vanish as laws are known.

Here again we are impressed and even daunted by the immense Universe to be explored. “What we know is a point to what we do not know.” Open any recent journal of science, and weigh the problems suggested concerning Light, Heat, Electricity, Magnetism, Physiology, Geology, and judge whether the interest of natural science is likely to be soon exhausted.

Passing by many particulars of the discipline of nature, we must not omit to specify two.

The exercise of the Will, or the lesson of power, is taught in every event. From the child's successive possession of his several senses up to the hour when he saith, “Thy will be done!” he is learning the secret that he can reduce under his will not only particular events but great classes, nay, the whole series of events, and so conform all facts to his character. Nature is thoroughly mediate. It is made to serve. It receives the

dominion of man as meekly as the ass on which the Saviour rode. It offers all its kingdoms to man as the raw material which he may mold into what is useful. Man is never weary of working it up. He forges the subtile and delicate air into wise and melodious words, and gives them wing as angels of persuasion and command. One after another his victorious thought comes up with and reduces all things, until the world becomes at last only a realized will — the double of the man.

2. Sensible objects conform to the premonitions of Reason and reflect the conscience. All things are moral; and in their boundless changes have an unceasing reference to spiritual nature. Therefore is nature glorious with form, color, and motion; that every globe in the remotest heaven, every chemical change from the rudest crystal up to the laws of life, every change of vegetation from the first principle of growth in the eye of a leaf, to the tropical forest and antediluvian coal-mine, every animal function from the sponge up to Hercules, shall hint or thunder to man the laws of right and wrong, and echo the Ten Commandments. Therefore is Nature ever the ally of Religion: lends all her pomp and riches to the religious sentiment. Prophet and priest, David, Isaiah, Jesus, have drawn deeply from this source. This ethical character so penetrates the bone and marrow of nature, as to seem the end for which it was made. Whatever private purpose is answered by any member or part, this is its public and universal function, and is never omitted. Nothing in nature is exhausted in its first use. When a thing has served an end to the uttermost, it is wholly new for an ulterior service. In God, every end is converted into a new means. Thus the use of commodity, regarded by itself, is mean and squalid. But it is to the mind an education in the doctrine of Use, namely, that a thing is good only so far as it serves; that a conspiring of parts and efforts to the production of an end is essential to any being. The first and gross manifestation of this truth is our inevitable and hated training in values and wants, in corn and meat.

It has already been illustrated, that every

natural process is a version of a moral sentence. The moral law lies at the center of nature and radiates to the circumference. It is the pith and marrow of every substance, every relation, and every process. All things with which we deal, preach to us. What is a farm but a mute gospel? The chaff and the wheat, weeds and plants, blight, rain, insects, sun — it is a sacred emblem from the first furrow of spring to the last stack which the snow of winter overtakes in the fields. But the sailor, the shepherd, the miner, the merchant, in their several resorts, have each an experience precisely parallel, and leading to the same conclusion: because all organizations are radically alike. Nor can it be doubted that this moral sentiment which thus scents the air, grows in the grain, and impregnates the waters of the world, is caught by man and sinks into his soul. The moral influence of nature upon every individual is that amount of truth which it illustrates to him. Who can estimate this? Who can guess how much firmness the sea-beaten rock has taught the fisherman? how much tranquillity has been reflected to man from the azure sky, over whose unspotted deeps the winds forevermore drive flocks of stormy clouds, and leave no wrinkle or stain? how much industry and providence and affection we have caught from the pantomime of brutes? What a searching preacher of self-command is the varying phenomenon of Health!

Herein is especially apprehended the unity of Nature — the unity in variety — which meets us everywhere. All the endless variety of things make an identical impression. Xenophanes complained in his old age, that look where he would, all things hastened back to Unity. He was weary of seeing the same entity in the tedious variety of forms. The fable of Proteus has a cordial truth. A leaf, a drop, a crystal, a moment of time, is related to the whole, and partakes of the perfection of the whole. Each particle is a microcosm, and faithfully renders the likeness of the world.

Not only resemblances exist in things whose analogy is obvious, as when we detect the type of the human hand in the flipper of

the fossil saurus, but also in objects wherein there is great superficial unlikeness. Thus architecture is called "frozen music," by De Staël and Goethe. Vitruvius thought an architect should be a musician. "A Gothic church," said Coleridge, "is a petrified religion." Michael Angelo maintained, that, to an architect, a knowledge of anatomy is essential. . . . In Haydn's oratorios, the notes present to the imagination not only motions, as of the snake, the stag, the elephant, but colors also, as the green grass. The law of harmonic sound reappears in the harmonic colors. The granite is differenced in its laws only by the more or less of heat from the river that wears it away. The river, as it flows, resembles the air that flows over it, the air resembles the light which traverses it with more subtle currents; the light resembles the heat which rides with it through Space. Each creature is only a modification of the other; the likeness in them is more than the difference, and their radical law is one and the same. A rule of one art, or a law of one organization, holds true throughout nature. So intimate is this Unity, that, it is easily seen, it lies under the undermost garment of Nature, and betrays its source in Universal Spirit. For it pervades Thought also. Every universal truth which we express in words, implies or supposes every other truth. *Omne verum vero consonat.* It is like a great circle on a sphere, comprising all possible circles, which, however, may be drawn and comprise it in like manner. Every such truth is the absolute Ens seen from one side. But it has innumerable sides.

The central Unity is still more conspicuous in actions. Words are finite organs of the infinite mind. They cannot cover the dimensions of what is in truth. They break, chop, and impoverish it. An action is the perfection and publication of thought. A right action seems to fill the eye, and to be related to all nature. "The wise man, in doing one thing, does all; or, in the one thing he does rightly, he sees the likeness of all which is done rightly."

Words and actions are not the attributes of brute nature. They introduce us to the human form, of which all other organiza-

tions appear to be degradations. When this appears among so many that surround it, the spirit prefers it to all others. It says, "From such as this have I drawn joy and knowledge. In such as this I have found and beheld myself, I will speak to it; it can speak again; it can yield me thought already formed and alive." In fact, the eye — the mind — is always accompanied by these forms, male and female; and these are incomparably the richest informations of the power and order that lie at the heart of things. Unfortunately every one of them bears the marks as of some injury; is marred and superficially defective. Nevertheless, far different from the deaf and dumb nature around them, these all rest like fountain-pipes on the unfathomed sea of thought and virtue whereto they alone, of all organizations, are the entrances.

It were a pleasant inquiry to follow into detail their ministry to our education, but where would it stop? We are associated in adolescent and adult life with some friends, who, like skies and waters, are coextensive with our idea; who, answering each to a certain affection of the soul, satisfy our desire on that side; whom we lack power to put at such focal distance from us, that we can mend or even analyze them. We cannot choose but love them. When much intercourse with a friend has supplied us with a standard of excellence, and has increased our respect for the resources of God who thus sends a real person to outgo our ideal; when he has, moreover, become an object of thought, and, whilst his character retains all its unconscious effect, is converted in the mind into solid and sweet wisdom — it is a sign to us that his office is closing, and he is commonly withdrawn from our sight in a short time.

## VI. IDEALISM

Thus is the unspeakable but intelligible and practicable meaning of the world conveyed to man, the immortal pupil, in every object of sense. To this one end of Discipline, all parts of nature conspire.

A noble doubt perpetually suggests itself — whether this end be not the Final Cause of the Universe; and whether nature outwardly



exists. It is a sufficient account of that Appearance we call the World, that God will teach a human mind, and so makes it the receiver of a certain number of congruent sensations, which we call sun and moon, man and woman, house and trade. In my utter impotence to test the authenticity of the report of my senses, to know whether the impressions they make on me correspond with outlying objects, what difference does it make, whether Orion is up there in heaven, or some god paints the image in the firmament of the soul? The relations of parts and the end of the whole remaining the same, what is the difference, whether land and sea interact, and worlds revolve and intermingle without number or end — deep yawning under deep, and galaxy balancing galaxy throughout absolute space — or whether, without relations of time and space, the same appearances are inscribed in the constant faith of man? Whether nature enjoy a substantial existence without, or is only in the apocalypse of the mind, it is alike useful and alike venerable to me. Be it what it may, it is ideal to me so long as I cannot try the accuracy of my senses.

The frivolous make themselves merry with the Ideal theory, as if its consequences were burlesque; as if it affected the stability of nature. It surely does not. God never jests with us, and will not compromise the end of nature by permitting any inconsequence in its procession. Any distrust of the permanence of laws would paralyze the faculties of man. Their permanence is sacredly respected, and his faith therein is perfect. The wheels and springs of man are all set to the hypothesis of the permanence of nature. We are not built like a ship to be tossed, but like a house to stand. It is a natural consequence of this structure, that so long as the active powers predominate over the reflective, we resist with indignation any hint that nature is more short-lived or mutable than spirit. The broker, the wheelwright, the carpenter, the tollman are much displeased at the intimation.

But whilst we acquiesce entirely in the permanence of natural laws, the question of the absolute existence of nature still remains

open. It is the uniform effect of culture on the human mind, not to shake our faith in the stability of particular phenomena, as of heat, water, azote; but to lead us to regard nature as phenomenon, not a substance; to attribute necessary existence to spirit; to esteem nature as an accident and an effect.

To the senses and the unrenewed understanding, belongs a sort of instinctive belief in the absolute existence of nature. In their view man and nature are indissolubly joined. Things are ultimates, and they never look beyond their sphere. The presence of Reason mars this faith. The first effort of thought tends to relax this despotism of the senses which binds us to nature as if we were a part of it, and shows us nature aloof, and, as it were, afloat. Until this higher agency intervened, the animal eye sees, with wonderful accuracy, sharp outlines and colored surfaces. When the eye of Reason opens, to outline and surface are at once added grace and expression. These proceed from imagination and affection, and abate somewhat of the angular distinctness of objects. If the Reason be stimulated to more earnest vision, outlines and surfaces become transparent, and are no longer seen; causes and spirits are seen through them. The best moments of life are these delicious awakenings of the higher powers, and the reverential withdrawing of nature before its God.

Let us proceed to indicate the effects of culture.

1. Our first institution in the Ideal philosophy is a hint from Nature herself.

Nature is made to conspire with spirit to emancipate us. Certain mechanical changes, a small alteration in our local position, apprises us of a dualism. We are strangely affected by seeing the shore from a moving ship, from a balloon, or through the tints of an unusual sky. The least change in our point of view gives the whole world a pictorial air. A man who seldom rides, needs only to get into a coach and traverse his own town, to turn the street into a puppet-show. The men, the women — talking, running, bartering, fighting — the earnest mechanic, the loungee, the beggar, the boys, the dogs, are unrealized at once, or, at least, wholly

detached from all relation to the observer, and seen as apparent, not substantial beings. What new thoughts are suggested by seeing a face of country quite familiar, in the rapid movement of the railroad car! Nay, the most wonted objects (make a very slight change in the point of vision) please us most. In a camera obscura, the butcher's cart, and the figure of one of our own family amuse us. So a portrait of a well-known face gratifies us. Turn the eyes upside down, by looking at the landscape through your legs, and how agreeable is the picture, though you have seen it any time these twenty years!

In these cases, by mechanical means, is suggested the difference between the observer and the spectacle — between man and nature. Hence arises a pleasure mixed with awe; I may say, a low degree of the sublime is felt, from the fact, probably, that man is hereby apprised that whilst the world is a spectacle, something in himself is stable.

2. In a higher manner the poet communicates the same pleasure. By a few strokes he delineates, as on air, the sun, the mountain, the camp, the city, the hero, the maiden, not different from what we know them, but only lifted from the ground and afloat before the eye. He unfixes the land and the sea, makes them revolve around the axis of his primary thought, and disposes them anew. Possessed himself by a heroic passion, he uses matter as symbols of it. The sensual man conforms thoughts to things; the poet conforms things to his thoughts. The one esteems nature as rooted and fast; the other, as fluid, and impresses his being thereon. To him, the refractory world is ductile and flexible; he invests dust and stones with humanity, and makes them the words of the Reason. The Imagination may be defined to be the use which Reason makes of the material world.

3. Whilst thus the poet animates nature with his own thoughts, he differs from the philosopher only herein, that the one proposes Beauty as his main end; the other Truth. But the philosopher, not less than the poet, postpones the apparent order and relations of things to the empire of thought. "The

problem of philosophy," according to Plato, "is, for all that exists conditionally, to find a ground unconditioned and absolute." It proceeds on the faith that a law determines all phenomena, which being known, the phenomena can be predicted. That law, when in the mind, is an idea. Its beauty is infinite. The true philosopher and the true poet are one, and a beauty, which is truth, and a truth, which is beauty, is the aim of both. Is not the charm of one of Plato's or Aristotle's definitions strictly like that of the *Antigone* of Sophocles? It is, in both cases, that a spiritual life has been imparted to nature; that the solid-seeming block of matter has been pervaded and dissolved by a thought; that this feeble human being has penetrated the vast masses of nature with an informing soul, and recognized itself in their harmony, that is, seized their law. In physics, when this is attained, the memory disburthens itself of its cumbrous catalogues of particulars, and carries centuries of observation in a single formula.

Thus even in physics, the material is degraded before the spiritual. The astronomer, the geometer, rely on their irrefragable analysis, and disdain the results of observation. The sublime remark of Euler on his law of arches, "This will be found contrary to all experience, yet is true," had already transferred nature into the mind, and left matter like an outcast corpse.

4. Intellectual science has been observed to beget invariably a doubt of the existence of matter. Turgot said, "He that has never doubted the existence of matter, may be assured he has no aptitude for metaphysical inquiries." It fastens the attention upon immortal necessary uncreated natures, that is, upon Ideas; and in their presence we feel that the outward circumstance is a dream and a shade. Whilst we wait in this Olympus of gods, we think of nature as an appendix to the soul. We ascend into their region, and know that these are the thoughts of the Supreme Being. "These are they who were set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When he prepared the heavens, they were there; when he established the clouds above, when he strength-

ened the fountains of the deep. Then they were by him, as one brought up with him. Of them took he counsel."

Their influence is proportionate. As objects of science they are accessible to few men. Yet all men are capable of being raised by piety or by passion, into their region. And no man touches these divine natures, without becoming, in some degree, himself divine. Like a new soul, they renew the body. We become physically nimble and lightsome; we tread on air; life is no longer irksome, and we think it will never be so. No man fears age or misfortune or death in their serene company, for he is transported out of the district of change. Whilst we behold unveiled the nature of Justice and Truth, we learn the difference between the absolute and the conditional or relative. We apprehend the absolute. As it were, for the first time, *we exist*. We become immortal, for we learn that time and space are relations of matter; that with a perception of truth or a virtuous will they have no affinity.

5. Finally, religion and ethics, which may be fitly called the practice of ideas, or the introduction of ideas into life, have an analogous effect with all lower culture, in degrading nature and suggesting its dependence on spirit. Ethics and religion differ herein; that the one is the system of human duties commencing from man; the other, from God. Religion includes the personality of God; Ethics does not. They are one to our present design. They both put nature under foot. The first and last lesson of religion is, "The things that are seen, are temporal; the things that are unseen, are eternal." It puts an affront upon nature. It does that for the unschooled, which philosophy does for Berkeley and Viasa. The uniform language that may be heard in the churches of the most ignorant sects is — "Contemn the unsubstantial shows of the world; they are vanities, dreams, shadows, unrealities; seek the realities of religion." The devotee flouts nature. Some theosophists have arrived at a certain hostility and indignation towards matter, as the Manichean and Plotinus. They distrusted in themselves any looking back to these fleshpots of Egypt. Plotinus was

ashamed of his body. In short, they might all say of matter, what Michael Angelo said of external beauty, "It is the frail and weary weed, in which God dresses the soul which he has called into time."

It appears that motion, poetry, physical and intellectual science, and religion, all tend to affect our convictions of the reality of the external world. But I own there is something ungrateful in expanding too curiously the particulars of the general proposition, that all culture tends to imbue us with idealism. I have no hostility to nature, but a child's love to it. I expand and live in the warm day like corn and melons. Let us speak her fair. I do not wish to fling stones at my beautiful mother, nor soil my gentle nest. I only wish to indicate the true position of nature in regard to man, wherein to establish man all right education tends; as the ground which to attain is the object of human life, that is, of man's connection with nature. Culture inverts the vulgar views of nature, and brings the mind to call that apparent which it uses to call real, and that real which is uses to call visionary. Children, it is true, believe in the external world. The belief that it appears only, is an afterthought, but with culture this faith will as surely arise on the mind as did the first.

The advantage of the ideal theory over the popular faith is this, that it presents the world in precisely that view which is most desirable to the mind. It is, in fact, the view which Reason, both speculative and practical, that is, philosophy and virtue, take. For seen in the light of thought, the world always is phenomenal; and virtue subordinates it to the mind. Idealism sees the world in God. It beholds the whole circle of persons and things, of actions and events, of country and religion, not as painfully accumulated, atom after atom, act after act, in an aged creeping Past, but as one vast picture which God paints on the instant eternity for the contemplation of the soul. Therefore the soul holds itself off from a too trivial and microscopic study of the universal tablet. It respects the end too much to immerse itself in the means. It sees something more important in Christianity than the scandals of

ecclesiastical history or the niceties of criticism; and, very incurious concerning persons or miracles, and not at all disturbed by chasms of historical evidence, it accepts from God the phenomenon, as it finds it, as the pure and awful form of religion in the world. It is not hot and passionate at the appearance of what it calls its own good or bad fortune, at the union or opposition of other persons. No man is its enemy. It accepts whatsoever befalls, as part of its lesson. It is a watcher more than a doer, and it is a doer, only that it may the better watch.

#### VII. SPIRIT

It is essential to a true theory of nature and of man, that it should contain somewhat progressive. Uses that are exhausted or that may be, and facts that end in the statement, cannot be all that is true of this brave lodging wherein man is harbored, and wherein all his faculties find appropriate and endless exercise. And all the uses of nature admit of being summed in one, which yields the activity of man an infinite scope. Through all its kingdoms, to the suburbs and outskirts of things, it is faithful to the cause whence it had its origin. It always speaks of Spirit. It suggests the absolute. It is a perpetual effect. It is a great shadow pointing always to the sun behind us.

The aspect of Nature is devout. Like the figure of Jesus, she stands with bended head, and hands folded upon the breast. The happiest man is he who learns from nature the lesson of worship.

Of that ineffable essence which we call spirit, he that thinks most, will say least. We can foresee God in the coarse, and, as it were, distant phenomena of matter; but when we try to define and describe himself, both language and thought desert us, and we are as helpless as fools and savages. That essence refuses to be recorded in propositions, but when man has worshiped him intellectually, the noblest ministry of nature is to stand as the apparition of God. It is the organ through which the universal spirit speaks to the individual, and strives to lead back the individual to it.

When we consider Spirit, we see that the views already presented do not include the whole circumference of man. We must add some related thoughts.

Three problems are put by nature to the mind: What is matter? Whence is it? and Whereto? The first of these questions only, the ideal theory answers. Idealism saith: matter is a phenomenon, not a substance. Idealism acquaints us with the total disparity between the evidence of our own being and the evidence of the world's being. The one is perfect; the other, incapable of any assurance; the mind is a part of the nature of things; the world is a divine dream, from which we may presently awake to the glories and certainties of day. Idealism is an hypothesis to account for nature by other principles than those of carpentry and chemistry. Yet, if it only deny the existence of matter, it does not satisfy the demands of the spirit. It leaves God out of me. It leaves me in the splendid labyrinth of my perceptions, to wander without end. Then the heart resists it, because it balks the affections in denying substantive being to men and women. Nature is so pervaded with human life that there is something of humanity in all and in every particular. But this theory makes nature foreign to me, and does not account for that consanguinity which we acknowledge to it.

Let it stand then, in the present state of our knowledge, merely as a useful introductory hypothesis, serving to apprise us of the eternal distinction between the soul and the world.

But when, following the invisible steps of thought, we come to inquire, Whence is matter? and Whereto? many truths arise to us out of the recesses of consciousness. We learn that the highest is present to the soul of man; that the dread universal essence, which is not wisdom, or love, or beauty, or power, but all in one, and each entirely, is that for which all things exist, and that by which they are; that spirit creates; that behind nature, throughout nature, spirit is present; one and not compound it does not act upon us from without, that is, in space and time, but spiritually, or through our-

selves; therefore, that spirit, that is, the Supreme Being, does not build up nature around us, but puts it forth through us, as the life of the tree puts forth new branches and leaves through the pores of the old. As a plant upon the earth, so a man rests upon the bosom of God, he is nourished by un-failing fountains, and draws at his need inexhaustible power. Who can set bounds to the possibilities of man? Once inhale the upper air, being admitted to behold the absolute natures of justice and truth, and we learn that man has access to the entire mind of the Creator, is himself the creator in the finite. This view, which admonishes me where the sources of wisdom and power lie, and points to virtue as to

The golden key  
Which opes the palace of eternity,

carries upon its face the highest certificate of truth, because it animates me to create my own world through the purification of my soul.

The world proceeds from the same spirit as the body of man. It is a remoter and inferior incarnation of God, a projection of God in the unconscious. But it differs from the body in one important respect. It is not, like that, now subjected to the human will. Its serene order is inviolable by us. It is, therefore, to us, the present expositor of the divine mind. It is a fixed point whereby we may measure our departure. As we degenerate, the contrast between us and our house is more evident. We are as much strangers in nature as we are aliens from God. We do not understand the notes of birds. The fox and the deer run away from us; the bear and tiger rend us. We do not know the uses of more than a few plants, as corn and the apple, the potato and the vine. Is not the landscape, every glimpse of which hath a grandeur, a face of him? Yet this may show us what discord is between man and nature, for you cannot freely admire a noble landscape if laborers are digging in the field hard by. The poet finds something ridiculous in his delight until he is out of the sight of men.

### VIII. PROSPECTS

In inquiries respecting the laws of the world and the frame of things, the highest reason is always the truest. That which seems faintly possible, it is so refined, is often faint and dim because it is deepest seated in the mind among the eternal verities. Empirical science is apt to cloud the sight, and by the very knowledge of functions and processes to bereave the student of the manly contemplation of the whole. The savant becomes unpoetic. But the best-read naturalist who lends an entire and devout attention to truth, will see that there remains much to learn of his relation to the world, and that it is not to be learned by any addition or subtraction or other comparison of known quantities, but is arrived at by untaught sallies of the spirit, by a continual self-recovery, and by entire humility. He will perceive that there are far more excellent qualities in the student than preciseness and infallibility; that a guess is often more fruitful than an indisputable affirmation, and that a dream may let us deeper into the secret of nature than a hundred concerted experiments.

For the problems to be solved are precisely those which the physiologist and the naturalist omit to state. It is not so pertinent to man to know all the individuals of the animal kingdom, as it is to know whence and whereto is this tyrannizing unity in his constitution, which evermore separates and classifies things, endeavoring to reduce the most diverse to one form. When I behold a rich landscape, it is less to my purpose to recite correctly the order and superposition of the strata, than to know why all thought of multitude is lost in a tranquil sense of unity. I cannot greatly honor minuteness in details, so long as there is no hint to explain the relation between things and thoughts; no ray upon the *metaphysics* of conchology, of botany, of the arts, to show the relation of the forms of flowers, shells, animals, architecture, to the mind, and build science upon ideas. In a cabinet of natural history, we become sensible of a certain occult recognition and sympathy in regard to the most unwieldy and eccentric forms of beast, fish, and insect. The American who has been confined, in his own coun-

try, to the sight of buildings designed after foreign models, is surprised on entering York Minster or St. Peter's at Rome, by the feeling that these structures are imitations also — faint copies of an invisible archetype. Nor has science sufficient humanity, so long as the naturalist overlooks that wonderful congruity which subsists between man and the world; of which he is lord, not because he is the most subtle inhabitant, but because he is its head and heart, and finds something of himself in every great and small thing, in every mountain stratum, in every new law of color, fact of astronomy, or atmospheric influence which observation or analysis lays open.

The perception of this class of truths makes the attraction which draws men to science, but the end is lost sight of in attention to the means. In view of this half-sight of science, we accept the sentence of Plato, that "poetry comes nearer to vital truth than history." Every surmise and vaticination of the mind is entitled to a certain respect, and we learn to prefer imperfect theories, and sentences, which contain glimpses of truth, to digested systems which have no one valuable suggestion. A wise writer will feel that the ends of study and composition are best answered by announcing undiscovered regions of thought, and so communicating, through hope, new activity to the torpid spirit.

I shall therefore conclude this essay with some traditions of man and nature, which a certain poet sang to me; and which, as they have always been in the world, and perhaps reappear to every bard, may be both history and prophecy.

"The foundations of man are not in matter, but in spirit. But the element of spirit is eternity. To it, therefore, the longest series of events, the oldest chronologies are young and recent. In the cycle of the universal man, from whom the known individuals proceed, centuries are points, and all history is but the epoch of one degradation.

"We distrust and deny inwardly our sympathy with nature. We own and disown our relation to it, by turns. We are, like Nebuchadnezzar, dethroned, bereft of reason,

and eating grass like an ox. But who can set limits to the remedial force of spirit?

"A man is a god in ruins. When men are innocent, life shall be longer, and shall pass into the immortal, as gently as we awake from dreams. Now the world would be insane and rabid, if these disorganizations should last for hundreds of years. It is kept in check by death and infancy. Infancy is the perpetual Messiah, which comes into the arms of fallen men, and pleads with them to return to paradise.

"Man is the dwarf of himself. Once he was permeated and dissolved by spirit. He filled nature with his overflowing currents. Out from him sprang the sun and moon; from man, the sun; from woman, the moon. The laws of his mind, the periods of his actions externized themselves into day and night, into the year and the seasons. But, having made for himself this huge shell, his waters retired; he no longer fills the veins and veinlets; he is shrunk to a drop. He sees, that the structure still fits him, but fits him colossally. Say, rather, once it fitted him, now it corresponds to him from far and on high. He adores timidly his own work. Now is man the follower of the sun, and woman the follower of the moon. Yet sometimes he starts in his slumber, and wonders at himself and his house, and muses strangely at the resemblance betwixt him and it. He perceives that if his law is still paramount, if still he have elemental power, if his word is sterling yet in nature, it is not conscious power, it is not inferior but superior to his will. It is Instinct." Thus my Orphic poet sang.

At present, man applies to nature but half his force. He works on the world with his understanding alone. He lives in it, and masters it by a penny-wisdom; and he that works most in it, is but a half-man, and whilst his arms are strong and his digestion good, his mind is imbruted, and he is a selfish savage. His relation to nature, his power over it, is through the understanding; as by manure; the economic use of fire, wind, water, and the mariner's needle; steam, coal, chemical agriculture; the repairs of the human body by the dentist and the surgeon.

This is such a resumption of power, as if a banished king should buy his territories inch by inch, instead of vaulting at once to his throne. Meantime, in the thick darkness, there are not wanting gleams of a better light — occasional examples of the action of man upon nature with his entire force — with reason as well as understanding. Such examples are: the traditions of miracles in the earliest antiquity of all nations; the history of Jesus Christ, the achievements of a principle, as in religious and political revolutions, and in the abolition of the Slave-trade; the miracles of enthusiasm, as those reported of Swedenborg, Hohenlohe, and the Shakers; many obscure and yet contested facts, now arranged under the name of Animal Magnetism; prayer, eloquence, self-healing, and the wisdom of children. These are examples of Reason's momentary grasp of the scepter; the exertions of a power which exists not in time or space, but an instantaneous instreaming causing power. The difference between the actual and the ideal force of man is happily figured by the schoolmen, in saying, that the knowledge of man is an evening knowledge, *vespertina cognitio*, but that of God is a morning knowledge, *matutina cognitio*.

The problem of restoring to the world original and eternal beauty, is solved by the redemption of the soul. The ruin or the blank, that we see when we look at nature, is in our own eye. The axis of vision is not coincident with the axis of things, and so they appear not transparent but opaque. The reason why the world lacks unity, and lies broken and in heaps, is, because man is disunited with himself. He cannot be a naturalist, until he satisfies all the demands of the spirit. Love is as much its demand, as perception. Indeed, neither can be perfect without the other. In the uttermost meaning of the words, thought is devout, and devotion is thought. Deep calls unto deep. But in actual life, the marriage is not celebrated. There are innocent men who worship God after the tradition of their fathers, but their sense of duty has not yet extended to the use of all their faculties. And there are patient naturalists, but they freeze their subject under the wintry light of the under-

standing. Is not prayer also a study of truth — a sally of the soul into the unfound infinite? No man ever prayed heartily, without learning something. But when a faithful thinker, resolute to detach every object from personal relations, and see it in the light of thought, shall, at the same time, kindle science with the fire of the holiest affections, then will God go forth anew into the creation.

It will not need, when the mind is prepared for study, to search for objects. The invariable mark of wisdom is to see the miraculous in the common. What is a day? What is a year? What is summer? What is woman? What is a child? What is sleep? To our blindness, these things seem unaffecting. We make fables to hide the baldness of the fact and conform it, as we say, to the higher law of the mind. But when the fact is seen under the light of an idea, the gaudy fable fades and shrivels. We behold the real higher law. To the wise, therefore, a fact is true poetry, and the most beautiful of fables. These wonders are brought to our own door. You also are a man. Man and woman, and their social life, poverty, labor, sleep, fear, fortune, are known to you. Learn that none of these things is superficial, but that each phenomenon has its roots in the faculties and affections of the mind. Whilst the abstract question occupies your intellect, nature brings it in the concrete to be solved by your hands. It were a wise inquiry for the closet, to compare, point by point, especially at remarkable crises in life, our daily history, with the rise and progress of ideas in the mind.

So shall we come to look at the world with new eyes. It shall answer the endless inquiry of the intellect — What is truth? and of the affections — What is good? by yielding itself passive to the educated will. Then shall come to pass what my poet said: "Nature is not fixed but fluid. Spirit alters, molds, makes it. The immobility or bruteness of nature, is the absence of spirit; to pure spirit, it is fluid, it is volatile, it is obedient. Every spirit builds itself a house; and beyond its house a world; and beyond its world, a heaven. Know then, that the world exists



for you. For you is the phenomenon perfect. What we are, that only can we see. All that Adam had, all that Caesar could, you have and can do. Adam called his house, heaven and earth; Caesar called his house Rome; you perhaps call yours, a cobbler's trade; a hundred acres of ploughed land, or a scholar's garret. Yet line for line and point for point, your dominion is as great as theirs, though without fine names. Build, therefore, your own world. As fast as you conform your life to the pure idea in your mind, that will unfold its great proportions. A correspondent revolution in things will attend the influx of the spirit. So fast will disagreeable appearances, swine, spiders, snakes, pests, mad-houses, prisons, enemies,

vanish, they are temporary and shall be no more seen. The sordor and filths of nature, the sun shall dry up, and the wind exhale. As when the summer comes from the south; the snow-banks melt, and the face of the earth becomes green before it, so shall the advancing spirit create its ornaments along its path, and carry with it the beauty it visits, and the song which enchants it, it shall draw beautiful faces, warm hearts, wise discourse, and heroic acts, around its way, until evil is no more seen. The kingdom of man over nature, which cometh not with observation — a dominion such as now is beyond his dream of God — he shall enter without more wonder than the blind man feels who is gradually restored to perfect sight."

## THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR<sup>1</sup>

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN:

I greet you on the recommencement of our literary year. Our anniversary is one of hope, and, perhaps, not enough of labor. We do not meet for games of strength or skill, for the recitation of histories, tragedies, and odes, like the ancient Greeks; for parliaments of love and poesy, like the Troubadours, nor for the advancement of science, like our contemporaries in the British and European capitals. Thus far, our holiday has been simply a friendly sign of the survival of the love of letters amongst a people too busy to give to letters any more. As such it is precious as the sign of an indestructible instinct. Perhaps the time is already come when it ought to be, and will be, something else; when the sluggish intellect of this continent will look from under its iron lids and fill the postponed expectation of the world with something better than the exertions of mechanical skill. Our day of dependence, our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands, draws to a close. The millions that around us are rushing into life, cannot always be fed on the sere remains of foreign harvests.

Events, actions arise, that must be sung, that will sing themselves. Who can doubt that poetry will revive and lead in a new age, as the star in the constellation Harp, which now flames in our zenith, astronomers announce, shall one day be the pole-star for a thousand years?

In this hope I accept the topic which not only usage but the nature of our association seem to prescribe to this day — the AMERICAN SCHOLAR. Year by year we come up hither to read one more chapter of his biography. Let us inquire what light new days and events have thrown on his character and his hopes.

It is one of those fables which out of an unknown antiquity convey an unlooked-for wisdom, that the gods, in the beginning, divided Man into men, that he might be more helpful to himself, just as the hand was divided into fingers, the better to answer its end.

The old fable covers a doctrine ever new and sublime; that there is One Man — present to all particular men only partially, or through one faculty; and that you must take

<sup>1</sup> An oration delivered before the Phi Beta Kappa Society at Cambridge, August 31, 1837. *Nature, Addresses, and Lectures*, vol. 1. Centenary Edition. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1904.



the whole society to find the whole man. Man is not a farmer, or a professor, or an engineer, but he is all. Man is priest, and scholar, and statesman, and producer, and soldier. In the *divided* or social state these functions are parceled out to individuals, each of whom aims to do his stint of the joint work, whilst each other performs his. The fable implies that the individual, to possess himself, must sometimes return from his own labor to embrace all the other laborers. But, unfortunately, this original unit, this fountain of power, has been so distributed to multitudes, has been so minutely subdivided and peddled out, that it is spilled into drops, and cannot be gathered. The state of society is one in which the members have suffered amputation from the trunk, and strut about so many walking monsters — a good finger, a neck, a stomach, an elbow, but never a man.

Man is thus metamorphosed into a thing, into many things. The planter, who is Man sent out into the field to gather food, is seldom cheered by any idea of the true dignity of his ministry. He sees his bushel and his cart, and nothing beyond, and sinks into the farmer, instead of Man on the farm. The tradesman scarcely ever gives an ideal worth to his work, but is ridden by the routine of his craft, and the soul is subject to dollars. The priest becomes a form; the attorney a statute-book; the mechanic a machine; the sailor a rope of the ship.

In this distribution of functions the scholar is the delegated intellect. In the right state he is *Man Thinking*. In the degenerate state, when the victim of society, he tends to become a mere thinker, or still worse, the parrot of other men's thinking.

In this view of him, as *Man Thinking*, the theory of his office is contained. Him Nature solicits with all her placid, all her monitory pictures; him the past instructs; him the future invites. Is not indeed every man a student, and do not all things exist for the student's behoof? And, finally, is not the true scholar the only true master? But the old oracle said, "All things have two handles; beware of the wrong one." In life, too often, the scholar errs with mankind

and forfeits his privilege. Let us see him in his school, and consider him in reference to the main influences he receives.

I. The first in time and the first in importance of the influences upon the mind is that of nature. Every day, the sun; and, after sunset, Night and her stars. Ever the winds blow; ever the grass grows. Every day, men and women, conversing — beholding and beholden. The scholar is he of all men whom this spectacle most engages. He must settle its value in his mind. What is nature to him? There is never a beginning, there is never an end, to the inexplicable continuity of this web of God, but always circular power returning into itself. Therein it resembles his own spirit, whose beginning, whose ending, he never can find — so entire, so boundless. Far too as her splendors shine, system on system shooting like rays, upward, downward, without center, without circumference — in the mass and in the particle, Nature hastens to render account of herself to the mind. Classification begins. To the young mind every thing is individual, stands by itself. By and by, it finds how to join two things and see in them one nature; then three, then three thousand; and so, tyrannized over by its own unifying instinct, it goes on tying things together, diminishing anomalies, discovering roots running under ground whereby contrary and remote things cohere and flower out from one stem. It presently learns that since the dawn of history there has been a constant accumulation and classifying of facts. But what is classification but the perceiving that these objects are not chaotic, and are not foreign, but have a law which is also a law of the human mind? The astronomer discovers that geometry, a pure abstraction of the human mind, is the measure of planetary motion. The chemist finds proportions and intelligible method throughout matter; and science is nothing but the finding of analogy, identity, in the most remote parts. The ambitious soul sits down before each refractory fact; one after another reduces all strange constitutions, all new powers, to their class and their law, and goes on forever to animate the

last fiber of organization, the outskirts of nature, by insight.

Thus to him, to this schoolboy under the bending dome of day, is suggested that he and it proceed from one root, one is leaf and one is flower, relation, sympathy, stirring in every vein. And what is that root? Is not that the soul of his soul? A thought too bold; a dream too wild. Yet when this spiritual light shall have revealed the law of more earthly natures — when he has learned to worship the soul, and to see that the natural philosophy that now is, is only the first gropings of its gigantic hand, he shall look forward to an ever expanding knowledge as to a becoming creator. He shall see that nature is the opposite of the soul, answering to it part for part. One is seal and one is print. Its beauty is the beauty of his own mind. Its laws are the laws of his own mind. Nature then becomes to him the measure of his attainments. So much of nature as he is ignorant of, so much of his own mind does he not yet possess. And, in fine, the ancient precept, "Know thyself," and the modern precept, "Study nature," become at last one maxim.

II. The next great influence into the spirit of the scholar is the mind of the Past — in whatever form, whether of literature, of art, of institutions, that mind is inscribed. Books are the best type of the influence of the past, and perhaps we shall get at the truth — learn the amount of this influence more conveniently — by considering their value alone.

The theory of books is noble. The scholar of the first age received into him the world around; brooded thereon; gave it the new arrangement of his own mind, and uttered it again. It came into him life; it went out from him truth. It came to him short-lived actions; it went out from him immortal thoughts. It came to him business; it went from him poetry. It was dead fact; now, it is quick thought. It can stand, and it can go. It now endures, it now flies, it now inspires. Precisely in proportion to the depth of mind from which it issued, so high does it soar, so long does it sing.

Or, I might say, it depends on how far the process had gone, of transmuting life into

truth. In proportion to the completeness of the distillation, so will the purity and imperishableness of the product be. But none is quite perfect. As no air-pump can by any means make a perfect vacuum, so neither can any artist entirely exclude the conventional, the local, the perishable from his book, or write a book of pure thought, that shall be as efficient, in all respects, to a remote posterity, as to contemporaries, or rather to the second age. Each age, it is found, must write its own books; or rather, each generation for the next succeeding. The books of an older period will not fit this.

Yet hence arises a grave mischief. The sacredness which attaches to the act of creation, the act of thought, is transferred to the record. The poet chanting was felt to be a divine man. Henceforth the chant is divine also. The writer was a just and wise spirit: henceforward it is settled the book is perfect, as love of the hero corrupts into worship of his statue. Instantly the book becomes noxious: the guide is a tyrant. The sluggish and perverted mind of the multitude, slow to open to the incursions of Reason, having once so opened, having once received this book, stands upon it, and makes an outcry if it is disparaged. Colleges are built on it. Books are written on it by thinkers, not by Man Thinking; by men of talent, that is, who start wrong, who set out from accepted dogmas, not from their own sight of principles. Meek young men grow up in libraries, believing it their duty to accept the views which Cicero, which Locke, which Bacon, have given; forgetful that Cicero, Locke, and Bacon were only young men in libraries when they wrote these books.

Hence, instead of Man Thinking, we have the bookworm. Hence the book-learned class, who value books, as such; not as related to nature and the human constitution, but as making a sort of Third Estate with the world and the soul. Hence the restorers of readings, the emendators, the bibliomaniacs of all degrees.

Books are the best of things, well used; abused, among the worst. What is the right use? What is the one end which all means go to effect? They are for nothing but to

inspire. I had better never see a book than to be warped by its attraction clean out of my own orbit, and made a satellite instead of a system. The one thing in the world, of value, is the active soul. This every man is entitled to; this every man contains within him, although in almost all men obstructed and as yet unborn. The soul active sees absolute truth and utters truth, or creates. In this action it is genius; not the privilege of here and there a favorite, but the sound estate of every man. In its essence it is progressive. The book, the college, the school of art, the institution of any kind, stop with some past utterance of genius. This is good, say they — let us hold by this. They pin me down. They look backward and not forward. But genius looks forward: the eyes of man are set in his forehead, not in his hindhead: man hopes: genius creates. Whatever talents may be, if the man create not, the pure efflux of the Deity is not his; — cinders and smoke there may be, but not yet flame. There are creative manners, there are creative actions, and creative words; manners, actions, words, that is, indicative of no custom or authority, but springing spontaneous from the mind's own sense of good and fair.

On the other part, instead of being its own seer, let it receive from another mind its truth, though it were in torrents of light, without periods of solitude, inquest, and self-recovery, and a fatal disservice is done. Genius is always sufficiently the enemy of genius by over-influence. The literature of every nation bears me witness. The English dramatic poets have Shakspearized now for two hundred years.

Undoubtedly there is a right way of reading, so it be sternly subordinated. Man Thinking must not be subdued by his instruments. Books are for the scholar's idle times. When he can read God directly, the hour is too precious to be wasted in other men's transcripts of their readings. But when the intervals of darkness come, as come they must — when the sun is hid and the stars withdraw their shining — we repair to the lamps which were kindled by their way, to guide our steps to the East again, where the dawn is. We hear, that we may

speaking. The Arabian proverb says, "A fig tree, looking on a fig tree, becometh fruitful."

It is remarkable, the character of the pleasure we derive from the best books. They impress us with the conviction that one nature wrote and the same reads. We read the verses of one of the great English poets, of Chaucer, of Marvell, of Dryden, with the most modern joy — with a pleasure, I mean, which is in great part caused by the abstraction of all *time* from their verses. There is some awe mixed with the joy of our surprise, when this poet, who lived in some past world, two or three hundred years ago, says that which lies close to my own soul, that which I also had well-nigh thought and said. But for the evidence thence afforded to the philosophical doctrine of the identity of all minds, we should suppose some pre-established harmony, some foresight of souls that were to be, and some preparation of stores for their future wants, like the fact observed in insects, who lay up food before death for the young grub they shall never see.

I would not be hurried by any love of system, by any exaggeration of instincts, to underrate the Book. We all know, that as the human body can be nourished on any food, though it were boiled grass and the broth of shoes, so the human mind can be fed by any knowledge. And great and heroic men have existed who had almost no other information than by the printed page. I only would say that it needs a strong head to bear that diet. One must be an inventor to read well. As the proverb says, "He that would bring home the wealth of the Indies, must carry out the wealth of the Indies." There is then creative reading as well as creative writing. When the mind is braced by labor and invention, the page of whatever book we read becomes luminous with manifold allusion. Every sentence is doubly significant, and the sense of our author is as broad as the world. We then see, what is always true, that as the seer's hour of vision is short and rare among heavy days and months, so is its record, perchance, the least part of his volume. The discerning will read, in his Plato or Shakspeare, only that least part — only the authentic utterances of the oracle;

— all the rest he rejects, were it never so many times Plato's and Shakspeare's.

Of course there is a portion of reading quite indispensable to a wise man. History and exact science he must learn by laborious reading. Colleges, in like manner, have their indispensable office — to teach elements. But they can only highly serve us when they aim not to drill, but to create; when they gather from far every ray of various genius to their hospitable halls, and by the concentrated fires, set the hearts of their youth on flame. Thought and knowledge are natures in which apparatus and pretension avail nothing. Gowns and pecuniary foundations, though of towns of gold, can never counter-veil the least sentence or syllable of wit. Forget this, and our American colleges will recede in their public importance, whilst they grow richer every year.

III. There goes in the world a notion that the scholar should be a recluse, a valetudinarian — as unfit for any handiwork or public labor as a penknife for an axe. The so-called "practical men" sneer at speculative men, as if, because they speculate or *see*, they could do nothing. I have heard it said that the clergy — who are always, more universally than any other class, the scholars of their day — are addressed as women; that the rough, spontaneous conversation of men they do not hear, but only a mincing and diluted speech. They are often virtually disfranchised; and indeed there are advocates for their celibacy. As far as this is true of the studious classes, it is not just and wise. Action is with the scholar subordinate, but it is essential. Without it he is not yet man. Without it thought can never ripen into truth. Whilst the world hangs before the eye as a cloud of beauty, we cannot even see its beauty. Inaction is cowardice, but there can be no scholar without the heroic mind. The preamble of thought, the transition through which it passes from the unconscious to the conscious, is action. Only so much do I know, as I have lived. Instantly we know whose words are loaded with life, and whose not.

The world — this shadow of the soul, or *other me* — lies wide around. Its attractions

are the keys which unlock my thoughts and make me acquainted with myself. I run eagerly into this resounding tumult. I grasp the hands of those next me, and take my place in the ring to suffer and to work, taught by an instinct that so shall the dumb abyss be vocal with speech. I pierce its order; I dissipate its fear; I dispose of it within the circuit of my expanding life. So much only of life as I know by experience, so much of the wilderness have I vanquished and planted, or so far have I extended my being, my dominion. I do not see how any man can afford, for the sake of his nerves and his nap, to spare any action in which he can partake. It is pearls and rubies to his discourse. Drudgery, calamity, exasperation, want, are instructors in eloquence and wisdom. The true scholar grudges every opportunity of action past by, as a loss of power. It is the raw material out of which the intellect molds her splendid products. A strange process too, this by which experience is converted into thought, as a mulberry leaf is converted into satin. The manufacture goes forward at all hours.

The actions and events of our childhood and youth are now matters of calmest observation. They lie like fair pictures in the air. Not so with our recent actions — with the business which we now have in hand. On this we are quite unable to speculate. Our affections as yet circulate through it. We no more feel or know it than we feel the feet, or the hand, or the brain of our body. The new deed is yet a part of life — remains for a time immersed in our unconscious life. In some contemplative hour it detaches itself from the life like a ripe fruit, to become a thought of the mind. Instantly it is raised, transfigured; the corruptible has put on incorruption. Henceforth it is an object of beauty, however base its origin and neighborhood. Observe too the impossibility of antedating this act. In its grub state, it cannot fly, it cannot shine, it is a dull grub. But suddenly, without observation, the selfsame thing unfurls beautiful wings, and is an angel of wisdom. So is there no fact, no event, in our private history, which shall not, sooner or later, lose its adhesive,

inert form, and astonish us by soaring from our body into the empyrean. Cradle and infancy, school and playground, the fear of boys, and dogs, and ferules, the love of little maids and berries, and many another fact that once filled the whole sky, are gone already; friend and relative, profession and party, town and country, nation and world, must also soar and sing.

Of course, he who has put forth his total strength in fit actions has the richest return of wisdom. I will not shut myself out of this globe of action, and transplant an oak into a flowerpot, there to hunger and pine; nor trust the revenue of some single faculty, and exhaust one vein of thought, much like those Savoyards, who, getting their livelihood by carving shepherds, shepherdesses, and smoking Dutchmen, for all Europe, went out one day to the mountain to find stock, and discovered that they had whittled up the last of their pine trees. Authors we have, in numbers, who have written out their vein, and who, moved by a commendable prudence, sail for Greece or Palestine, follow the trapper into the prairie, or ramble round Algiers, to replenish their merchantable stock.

If it were only for a vocabulary, the scholar would be covetous of action. Life is our dictionary. Years are well spent in country labors; in town; in the insight into trades and manufactures; in frank intercourse with many men and women; in science; in art, to the one end of mastering in all their facts a language by which to illustrate and embody our perceptions. I learn immediately from any speaker how much he has already lived, through the poverty or the splendor of his speech. Life lies behind us as the quarry from whence we get tiles and copestones for the masonry of to-day. This is the way to learn grammar. Colleges and books only copy the language which the field and the work-yard made.

But the final value of action, like that of books, and better than books, is that it is a resource. That great principle of Undulation in nature, that shows itself in the inspiring and expiring of the breath; in desire and satiety; in the ebb and flow of the sea; in day and night; in heat and cold; and, as yet more

deeply ingrained in every atom and every fluid, is known to us under the name of Polarity — these "fits of easy transmission and reflection," as Newton called them, are the law of nature because they are the law of spirit.

The mind now thinks, now acts, and each fit reproduces the other. When the artist has exhausted his materials, when the fancy no longer paints, when thoughts are no longer apprehended and books are a weariness — he has always the resource *to live*. Character is higher than intellect. Thinking is the function. Living is the functionary. The stream retreats to its source. A great soul will be strong to live, as well as strong to think. Does he lack organ or medium to impart his truths? He can still fall back on this elemental force of living them. This is a total act. Thinking is a partial act. Let the grandeur of justice shine in his affairs. Let the beauty of affection cheer his lowly roof. Those "far from fame," who dwell and act with him, will feel the force of his constitution in the doings and passages of the day better than it can be measured by any public and designed display. Time shall teach him that the scholar loses no hour which the man lives. Herein he unfolds the sacred germ of his instinct, screened from influence. What is lost in seemliness is gained in strength. Not out of those on whom systems of education have exhausted their culture, comes the helpful giant to destroy the old or to build the new, but out of unhand-sold savage nature; out of terrible Druids and Berserkers come at last Alfred and Shakspeare.

I hear therefore with joy whatever is beginning to be said of the dignity and necessity of labor to every citizen. There is virtue yet in the hoe and the spade, for learned as well as for unlearned hands. And labor is everywhere welcome, always we are invited to work; only be this limitation observed, that a man shall not for the sake of wider activity sacrifice any opinion to the popular judgments and modes of action.

I have now spoken of the education of the scholar by nature, by books, and by action. It remains to say somewhat of his duties.

They are such as become Man Thinking. They may all be comprised in self-trust. The office of the scholar is to cheer, to raise, and to guide men by showing them facts amidst appearances. He plies the slow, unhonored, and unpaid task of observation. Flamsteed and Herschel, in their glazed observatories, may catalogue the stars with the praise of all men, and the results being splendid and useful, honor is sure. But he, in his private observatory, cataloguing obscure and nebulous stars of the human mind, which as yet no man has thought of as such — watching days and months sometimes for a few facts; correcting still his old records; — must relinquish display and immediate fame. In the long period of his preparation he must betray often an ignorance and shiftlessness in popular arts, incurring the disdain of the able who shoulder him aside. Long he must stammer in his speech; often forego the living for the dead. Worse yet, he must accept — how often! — poverty and solitude. For the ease and pleasure of treading the old road, accepting the fashions, the education, the religion of society, he takes the cross of making his own, and, of course, the self-accusation, the faint heart, the frequent uncertainty and loss of time, which are the nettles and tangling vines in the way of the self-relying and self-directed; and the state of virtual hostility in which he seems to stand to society, and especially to educated society. For all this loss and scorn, what offset? He is to find consolation in exercising the highest functions of human nature. He is one who raises himself from private considerations and breathes and lives on public and illustrious thoughts. He is the world's eye. He is the world's heart. He is to resist the vulgar prosperity that retrogrades ever to barbarism, by preserving and communicating heroic sentiments, noble biographies, melodious verse, and the conclusions of history. Whatsoever oracles the human heart, in all emergencies, in all solemn hours, has uttered as its commentary on the world of actions — these he shall receive and impart. And whatsoever new verdict Reason from her inviolable seat pronounces on the passing men and events of today — this he shall hear and promulgate.

These being his functions, it becomes him to feel all confidence in himself, and to defer never to the popular cry. He and he only knows the world. The world of any moment is the merest appearance. Some great decorum, some fetish of a government, some ephemeral trade, or war, or man, is cried up by half mankind and cried down by the other half, as if all depended on this particular up or down. The odds are that the whole question is not worth the poorest thought which the scholar has lost in listening to the controversy. Let him not quit his belief that a popgun is a popgun, though the ancient and honorable of the earth affirm it to be the crack of doom. In silence, in steadiness, in severe abstraction, let him hold by himself; add observation to observation, patient of neglect, patient of reproach, and bide his own time — happy enough if he can satisfy himself alone that this day he has seen something truly. Success treads on every right step. For the instinct is sure, that prompts him to tell his brother what he thinks. He then learns that in going down into the secrets of his own mind he has descended into the secrets of all minds. He learns that he who has mastered any law in his private thoughts, is master to that extent of all men whose language he speaks, and of all into whose language his own can be translated. The poet, in utter solitude remembering his spontaneous thoughts and recording them, is found to have recorded that which men in crowded cities find true for them also. The orator distrusts at first the fitness of his frank confessions, his want of knowledge of the persons he addresses, until he finds that he is the complement of his hearers; — that they drink his words because he fulfills for them their own nature; the deeper he dives into his privatest, secretest presentiment, to his wonder he finds this is the most acceptable, most public, and universally true. The people delight in it; the better part of every man feels, This is my music; this is myself.

In self-trust all the virtues are comprehended. Free should the scholar be — free and brave. Free even to the definition of freedom, "without any hindrance that does not arise out of his own constitution."

Brave; for fear is a thing which a scholar by his very function puts behind him. Fear always springs from ignorance. It is a shame to him if his tranquillity, amid dangerous times, arise from the presumption that like children and women his is a protected class; or if he seek a temporary peace by the diversion of his thoughts from politics or vexed questions, hiding his head like an ostrich in the flowering bushes, peeping into microscopes, and turning rhymes, as a boy whistles to keep his courage up. So is the danger a danger still; so is the fear worse. Manlike let him turn and face it. Let him look into its eye and search its nature, inspect its origin — see the whelping of this lion — which lies no great way back; he will then find in himself a perfect comprehension of its nature and extent; he will have made his hands meet on the other side, and can henceforth defy it and pass on superior. The world is his who can see through its pretension. What deafness, what stoneblind custom, what overgrown error you behold is there only by sufferance — by your sufferance. See it to be a lie, and you have already dealt it its mortal blow.

Yes, we are the cowed — we the trustless. It is a mischievous notion that we are come late into nature; that the world was finished a long time ago. As the world was plastic and fluid in the hands of God, so it is ever to so much of his attributes as we bring to it. To ignorance and sin, it is flint. They adapt themselves to it as they may; but in proportion as a man has anything in him divine, the firmament flows before him and takes his signet and form. Not he is great who can alter matter, but he who can alter my state of mind. They are the kings of the world who give the color of their present thought to all nature and all art, and persuade men by the cheerful serenity of their carrying the matter, that this thing which they do is the apple which the ages have desired to pluck, now at last ripe, and inviting nations to the harvest. The great man makes the great thing. Wherever Macdonald sits, there is the head of the table. Linnaeus makes botany the most alluring of studies, and wins it from the farmer and the herb-woman; Davy, chemistry;

and Cuvier, fossils. The day is always his who works in it with serenity and great aims. The unstable estimates of men crowd to him whose mind is filled with a truth, as the heaped waves of the Atlantic follow the moon.

For this self-trust, the reason is deeper than can be fathomed — darker than can be enlightened. I might not carry with me the feeling of my audience in stating my own belief. But I have already shown the ground of my hope, in adverting to the doctrine that man is one. I believe man has been wronged; he has wronged himself. He has almost lost the light that can lead him back to his prerogatives. Men are become of no account. Men in history, men in the world of to-day, are bugs, are spawn, and are called "the mass" and "the herd." In a century, in a millennium, one or two men; that is to say, one or two approximations to the right state of every man. All the rest behold in the hero or the poet their own green and crude being — ripened; yes, and are content to be less, so *that* may attain to its full stature. What a testimony, full of grandeur, full of pity, is borne to the demands of his own nature, by the poor clansman, the poor partisan, who rejoices in the glory of his chief. The poor and the low find some amends to their immense moral capacity, for their acquiescence in a political and social inferiority. They are content to be brushed like flies from the path of a great person, so that justice shall be done by him to that common nature which it is the dearest desire of all to see enlarged and glorified. They sun themselves in the great man's light, and feel it to be their own element. They cast the dignity of man from their down-trod selves upon the shoulders of a hero, and will perish to add one drop of blood to make that great heart beat, those giant sinews combat and conquer. He lives for us, and we live in him.

Men, such as they are, very naturally seek money or power; and power because it is as good as money — the "spoils," so called, "of office." And why not? for they aspire to the highest, and this in their sleep-walking they dream is highest. Wake them and they shall quit the false good and leap to the true,



and leave governments to clerks and desks. This revolution is to be wrought by the gradual domestication of the idea of Culture. The main enterprise of the world for splendor, for extent, is the upbuilding of a man. Here are the materials strewn along the ground. The private life of one man shall be a more illustrious monarchy, more formidable to its enemy, more sweet and serene in its influence to its friend, than any kingdom in history. For a man, rightly viewed, comprehendeth the particular natures of all men. Each philosopher, each bard, each actor has only done for me, as by a delegate, what one day I can do for myself. The books which once we valued more than the apple of the eye, we have quite exhausted. What is that but saying that we have come up with the point of view which the universal mind took through the eyes of one scribe; we have been that man, and have passed on. First, one, then another, we drain all cisterns, and waxing greater by all these supplies, we crave a better and more abundant food. The man has never lived that can feed us ever. The human mind cannot be enshrined in a person who shall set a barrier on any one side to this unbounded, unboundable empire. It is one central fire, which, flaming now out of the lips of Etna, lightens the capes of Sicily, and now out of the throat of Vesuvius, illuminates the towers and vineyards of Naples. It is one light which beams out of a thousand stars. It is one soul which animates all men.

But I have dwelt perhaps tediously upon this abstraction of the Scholar. I ought not to delay longer to add what I have to say of nearer reference to the time and to this country.

Historically, there is thought to be a difference in the ideas which predominate over successive epochs, and there are data for marking the genius of the Classic, of the Romantic, and now of the Reflective or Philosophical age. With the views I have intimated of the oneness or the identity of the mind through all individuals, I do not much dwell on these differences. In fact, I believe each individual passes through all three. The boy is a Greek; the youth, romantic; the

adult, reflective. I deny not, however, that a revolution in the leading idea may be distinctly enough traced.

Our age is bewailed as the age of Introversion. Must that needs be evil? We, it seems, are critical; we are embarrassed with second thoughts; we cannot enjoy anything for hankering to know whereof the pleasure consists; we are lined with eyes; we see with our feet; the time is infected with Hamlet's unhappiness —

"Sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought."

It is so bad then? Sight is the last thing to be pitied. Would we be blind? Do we fear lest we should outsee nature and God, and drink truth dry? I look upon the discontent of the literary class as a mere announcement of the fact that they find themselves not in the state of mind of their fathers, and regret the coming state as untried; as a boy dreads the water before he has learned that he can swim. If there is any period one would desire to be born in, is it not the age of Revolution; when the old and the new stand side by side and admit of being compared; when the energies of all men are searched by fear and by hope; when the historic glories of the old can be compensated by the rich possibilities of the new era? This time, like all times, is a very good one, if we but know what to do with it.

I read with some joy of the auspicious signs of the coming days, as they glimmer already through poetry and art, through philosophy and science, through church and state.

One of these signs is the fact that the same movement which effected the elevation of what was called the lowest class in the state, assumed in literature a very marked and as benign an aspect. Instead of the sublime and beautiful, the near, the low, the common, was explored and poetized. That which had been negligently trodden under foot by those who were harnessing and provisioning themselves for long journeys into far countries, is suddenly found to be richer than all foreign parts. The literature of the poor, the feelings of the child, the philosophy of the street, the meaning of household life, are the topics of the time. It is a great stride.



It is a sign — is it not? — of new vigor when the extremities are made active, when currents of warm life run into the hands and the feet. I ask not for the great, the remote, the romantic; what is doing in Italy or Arabia; what is Greek art, or Provençal minstrelsy; I embrace the common, I explore and sit at the feet of the familiar, the low. Give me insight into to-day, and you may have the antique and future worlds. What would we really know the meaning of? The meal in the firkin; the milk in the pan; the ballad in the street; the news of the boat; the glance of the eye; the form and the gait of the body; — show me the ultimate reason of these matters; show me the sublime presence of the highest spiritual cause lurking, as always it does lurk, in these suburbs and extremities of nature; let me see every trifle bristling with the polarity that ranges it instantly on an eternal law; and the shop, the plough, and the ledger referred to the like cause by which light undulates and poets sing; — and the world lies no longer a dull miscellany and lumber-room, but has form and order; there is no trifle, there is no puzzle, but one design unites and animates the farthest pinnacle and the lowest trench.

This idea has inspired the genius of Goldsmith, Burns, Cowper, and, in a newer time, of Goethe, Wordsworth, and Carlyle. This idea they have differently followed and with various success. In contrast with their writing, the style of Pope, of Johnson, of Gibbon, looks cold and pedantic. This writing is blood-warm. Man is surprised to find that things near are not less beautiful and wondrous than things remote. The near explains the far. The drop is a small ocean. A man is related to all nature. This perception of the worth of the vulgar is fruitful in discoveries. Goethe, in this very thing the most modern of the moderns, has shown us, as none ever did, the genius of the ancients.

There is one man of genius who has done much for this philosophy of life, whose literary value has never yet been rightly estimated; — I mean Emanuel Swedenborg. The most imaginative of men, yet writing with the precision of a mathematician, he endeavored to engraft a purely philosophical

Ethics on the popular Christianity of his time. Such an attempt of course must have difficulty which no genius could surmount. But he saw and showed the connection between nature and the affections of the soul. He pierced the emblematic or spiritual character of the visible, audible, tangible world. Especially did his shade-loving muse hover over and interpret the lower parts of nature; he showed the mysterious bond that allies moral evil to the foul material forms, and has given in epical parables a theory of insanity, of beasts, of unclean and fearful things.

Another sign of our times, also marked by an analogous political movement, is the new importance given to the single person. Everything that tends to insulate the individual — to surround him with barriers of natural respect, so that each man shall feel the world is his, and man shall treat with man as a sovereign state with a sovereign state — tends to true union as well as greatness. "I learned," said the melancholy Pestalozzi, "that no man in God's wide earth is either willing or able to help any other man." Help must come from the bosom alone. The scholar is that man who must take up into himself all the ability of the time, all the contributions of the past, all the hopes of the future. He must be an university of knowledges. If there be one lesson more than another which should pierce his ear, it is, The world is nothing, the man is all; in yourself is the law of all nature, and you know not yet how a globule of sap ascends; in yourself slumbers the whole of Reason; it is for you to know all; it is for you to dare all. Mr. President and Gentlemen, this confidence in the unsearched might of man belongs, by all motives, by all prophecy, by all preparation, to the American Scholar. We have listened too long to the courtly muses of Europe. The spirit of the American freeman is already suspected to be timid, imitative, tame. Public and private avarice make the air we breathe thick and fat. The scholar is decent, indolent, complaisant. See already the tragic consequence. The mind of this country, taught to aim at low objects, eats upon itself. There is no work for any but the decorous and the complaisant.

Young men of the fairest promise, who begin life upon our shores, inflated by the mountain winds, shined upon by all the stars of God, find the earth below not in unison with these, but are hindered from action by the disgust which the principles on which business is managed inspire, and turn drudges, or die of disgust, some of them suicides. What is the remedy? They did not yet see, and thousands of young men as hopeful now crowding to the barriers for the career do not yet see, that if the single man plant himself indomitably on his instincts, and there abide, the huge world will come round to him. Patience — patience; with the shades of all the good and great for company; and for solace the perspective of your own infinite life; and for work the study and the communication of principles, the making those instincts prevalent, the conversion of the world. Is it not

the chief disgrace in the world, not to be an unit; — not to be reckoned one character; — not to yield that peculiar fruit which each man was created to bear, but to be reckoned in the gross, in the hundred, or the thousand, of the party, the section, to which we belong; and our opinion predicted geographically, as the north, or the south? Not so, brothers and friends — please God, ours shall not be so. We will walk on our own feet; we will work with our own hands; we will speak our own minds. The study of letters shall be no longer a name for pity, for doubt, and for sensual indulgence. The dread of man and the love of man shall be a wall of defense and a wreath of joy around all. A nation of men will for the first time exist, because each believes himself inspired by the Divine Soul which also inspires all men.

## SELF-RELIANCE<sup>1</sup>

Ne te quaesiveris extra.

Man is his own star; and the soul that can  
Render an honest and a perfect man  
Commands all light, all influence, all fate;  
Nothing to him falls early or too late.  
Our acts our angels are, or good or ill,  
Our fatal shadows that walk by us still.

Beaumont and Fletcher,  
*Honest Man's Fortune*, Epilogue.

Cast the bantling on the rocks,  
Suckle him with the she-wolf's teat,  
Wintered with the hawk and fox,  
Power and speed be hands and feet.

I READ the other day some verses written by an eminent painter which were original and not conventional. The soul always hears an admonition in such lines, let the subject be what it may. The sentiment they instil is of more value than any thought they may contain. To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men — that is genius. Speak your latent conviction, and it shall

be the universal sense; for the inmost in due time becomes the outmost, and our first thought is rendered back to us by the trumpets of the Last Judgment. Familiar as the voice of the mind is to each, the highest merit we ascribe to Moses, Plato, and Milton is that they set at naught books and traditions, and spoke not what men, but what *they* thought. A man should learn to detect and watch that gleam of light which flashes across his mind from within, more than the lustre of the firmament of bards and sages. Yet he dismisses without notice his thought, because it is his. In every work of genius we recognize our own rejected thoughts; they come back to us with a certain alienated majesty. Great works of art have no more affecting lesson for us than this. They teach us to abide by our spontaneous impression with good-humored inflexibility then most when the whole cry of voices is on the other side. Else to-morrow a stranger will say with masterly good sense precisely what we have thought and felt all the time, and we

<sup>1</sup> *Essays, First Series*, vol. II, pp. 45-61. Centenary Edition. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1904.

shall be forced to take with shame our own opinion from another.

There is a time in every man's education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better for worse as his portion; that though the wide universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given to him to till. The power which resides in him is new in nature, and none but he knows what that is which he can do, nor does he know until he has tried. Not for nothing one face, one character, one fact, makes much impression on him, and another none. This sculpture in the memory is not without pre-established harmony. The eye was placed where one ray should fall, that it might testify of that particular ray. We but half express ourselves, and are ashamed of that divine idea which each of us represents. It may be safely trusted as proportionate and of good issues, so it be faithfully imparted, but God will not have his work made manifest by cowards. A man is relieved and gay when he has put his heart into his work and done his best; but what he has said or done otherwise shall give him no peace. It is a deliverance which does not deliver. In the attempt his genius deserts him; no muse befriends; no invention, no hope.

Trust thyself, every heart vibrates to that iron string. Accept the place the divine providence has found for you, the society of your contemporaries, the connection of events. Great men have always done so, and confided themselves childlike to the genius of their age, betraying their perception that the absolutely trustworthy was seated at their heart, working through their hands, predominating in all their being. And we are now men, and must accept in the highest mind the same transcendent destiny; and not minors and invalids in a protected corner, not cowards fleeing before a revolution, but guides, redeemers, and benefactors, obeying the Almighty effort and advancing on Chaos and the Dark.

What pretty oracles nature yields us on this text in the face and behavior of children,

babes, and even brutes! That divided and rebel mind, that distrust of a sentiment because our arithmetic has computed the strength and means opposed to our purpose, these have not. Their mind being whole, their eye is as yet unconquered, and when we look in their faces we are disconcerted. Infancy conforms to nobody; all conform to it; so that one babe commonly makes four or five out of the adults who prattle and play to it. So God has armed youth and puberty and manhood no less with its own piquancy and charm, and made it enviable and gracious and its claims not to be put by, if it will stand by itself. Do not think the youth has no force, because he cannot speak to you and me. Hark! in the next room his voice is sufficiently clear and emphatic. It seems he knows how to speak to his contemporaries. Bashful or bold then, he will know how to make us seniors very unnecessary.

The nonchalance of boys who are sure of a dinner, and would disdain as much as a lord to do or say aught to conciliate one, is the healthy attitude of human nature. A boy is in the parlor what the pit is in the playhouse; independent, irresponsible, looking out from his corner on such people and facts as pass by, he tries and sentences them on their merits, in the swift, summary way of boys, as good, bad, interesting, silly, eloquent, troublesome. He cumbers himself never about consequences, about interests; he gives an independent, genuine verdict. You must court him; he does not court you. But the man is as it were clapped into jail by his consciousness. As soon as he has once acted or spoken with *éclat* he is a committed person, watched by the sympathy or the hatred of hundreds, whose affections must now enter into his account. There is no Lethe for this. Ah, that he could pass again into his neutrality! Who can thus avoid all pledges and, having observed, observe again from the same unaffected, unbiased, unbribable, unaffrighted innocence — must always be formidable. He would utter opinions on all passing affairs, which being seen to be not private but necessary, would sink like darts into the ear of men and put them in fear.

These are the voices which we hear in

solitude, but they grow faint and inaudible as we enter into the world. Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members. Society is a joint-stock company, in which the members agree, for the better securing of his bread to each shareholder, to surrender the liberty and culture of the eater. The virtue in most request is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion. It loves not realities and creators, but names and customs.

Whoso would be a man, must be a non-conformist. He who would gather immortal palms must not be hindered by the name of goodness, but must explore if it be goodness. Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind. Absolve you to yourself, and you shall have the suffrage of the world. I remember an answer which when quite young I was prompted to make to a valued adviser who was wont to importune me with the dear old doctrines of the church. On my saying, "What have I to do with the sacredness of traditions, if I live wholly from within?" my friend suggested — "But these impulses may be from below, not from above." I replied, "They do not seem to me to be such; but if I am the Devil's child, I will live then from the Devil." No law can be sacred to me but that of my nature. Good and bad are but names very readily transferable to that or this; the only right is what is after my constitution; the only wrong what is against it. A man is to carry himself in the presence of all opposition as if everything were titular and ephemeral but he. I am ashamed to think how easily we capitulate to badges and names, to large societies and dead institutions. Every decent and well-spoken individual affects and sways me more than is right. I ought to go upright and vital, and speak the rude truth in all ways. If malice and vanity wear the coat of philanthropy, shall that pass? If an angry bigot assumes this bountiful cause of Abolition, and comes to me with his last news from Barbadoes, why should I not say to him, "Go love thy infant; love thy wood-chopper; be good-natured and modest; have that grace; and never varnish your hard, uncharitable ambition with this incredible tenderness for

black folk a thousand miles off. Thy love afar is spite at home." Rough and graceless would be such greeting, but truth is handsomer than the affectation of love. Your goodness must have some edge to it — else it is none. The doctrine of hatred must be preached, as the counteraction of the doctrine of love, when that pulses and whines. I shun father and mother and wife and brother when my genius calls me. I would write on the lintels of the door-post, *Whim*. I hope it is somewhat better than whim at last, but we cannot spend the day in explanation. Expect me not to show cause why I seek or why I exclude company. Then again, do not tell me, as a good man did today, of my obligation to put all poor men in good situations. Are they *my* poor? I tell thee, thou foolish philanthropist, that I grudge the dollar, the dime, the cent I give to such men as do not belong to me and to whom I do not belong. There is a class of persons to whom by all spiritual affinity I am bought and sold; for them I will go to prison if need be; but your miscellaneous popular charities; the education at college of fools; the building of meeting-houses to the vain end to which many now stand; alms to sots, and the thousand-fold Relief Societies; — though I confess with shame I sometimes succumb and give the dollar, it is a wicked dollar, which by and by I shall have the manhood to withhold.

Virtues are, in the popular estimate, rather the exception than the rule. There is the man *and* his virtues. Men do what is called a good action, as some piece of courage or charity, much as they would pay a fine in expiation of daily non-appearance on parade. Their works are done as an apology or extenuation of their living in the world — as invalids and the insane pay a high board. Their virtues are penances. I do not wish to expiate, but to live. My life is for itself and not for a spectacle. I much prefer that it should be of a lower strain, so it be genuine and equal, than that it should be glittering and unsteady. I wish it to be sound and sweet, and not to need diet and bleeding. I ask primary evidence that you are a man, and refuse this appeal from the man to his actions. I know that for myself it makes no difference

whether I do or forbear those actions which are reckoned excellent. I cannot consent to pay for a privilege where I have intrinsic right. Few and mean as my gifts may be, I actually am, and do not need for my own assurance or the assurance of my fellows any secondary testimony.

What I must do is all that concerns me, not what the people think. This rule, equally arduous in actual and in intellectual life, may serve for the whole distinction between greatness and meanness. It is the harder because you will always find those who think they know what is your duty better than you know it. It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.

The objection to conforming to usages that have become dead to you is that it scatters your force. It loses your time and blurs the impression of your character. If you maintain a dead church, contribute to a dead Bible-society, vote with a great party either for the government or against it, spread your table like base housekeepers — under all these screens I have difficulty to detect the precise man you are: and of course so much force is withdrawn from your proper life. But do your work, and I shall know you. Do your work, and you shall reinforce yourself. A man must consider what a blind-man's-buff is this game of conformity. If I know your sect I anticipate your argument. I hear a preacher announce for his text and topic the expediency of one of the institutions of his church. Do I not know beforehand that not possibly can he say a new and spontaneous word? Do I not know that with all this ostentation of examining the grounds of the institution he will do no such thing? Do I not know that he is pledged to himself not to look but at one side, the permitted side, not as a man, but as a parish minister? He is a retained attorney, and these airs of the bench are the emptiest affectation. Well, most men have bound their eyes with one or another handkerchief, and attached themselves to some one of these communities of

opinion. This conformity makes them not false in a few particulars, authors of a few lies, but false in all particulars. Their every truth is not quite true. Their two is not the real two, their four not the real four; so that every word they say chagrins us and we know not where to begin to set them right. Meantime nature is not slow to equip us in the prison-uniform of the party to which we adhere. We come to wear one cut of face and figure, and acquire by degrees the gentlest asinine expression. There is a mortifying experience in particular, which does not fail to wreak itself also in the general history; I mean "the foolish face of praise," the forced smile which we put on in company where we do not feel at ease, in answer to conversation which does not interest us. The muscles, not spontaneously moved but moved by a low usurping wilfulness, grow tight about the outline of the face, with the most disagreeable sensation.

For nonconformity the world whips you with its displeasure. And therefore a man must know how to estimate a sour face. The bystanders look askance on him in the public street or in the friend's parlor. If this aversion had its origin in contempt and resistance like his own he might well go home with a sad countenance; but the sour faces of the multitude, like their sweet faces, have no deep cause, but are put on and off as the wind blows and a newspaper directs. Yet is the discontent of the multitude more formidable than that of the senate and the college. It is easy enough for a firm man who knows the world to brook the rage of the cultivated classes. Their rage is decorous and prudent, for they are timid, as being very vulnerable themselves. But when to their feminine rage the indignation of the people is added, when the ignorant and the poor are aroused, when the unintelligent brute force that lies at the bottom of society is made to growl and mow, it needs the habit of magnanimity and religion to treat it godlike as a trifle of no concernment.

The other terror that scares us from self-trust is our consistency; a reverence for our past act or word because the eyes of others have no other data for computing our orbit

than our past acts, and we are loth to disappoint them.

But why should you keep your head over your shoulder? Why drag about this corpse of your memory, lest you contradict somewhat you have stated in this or that public place? Suppose you should contradict yourself; what then? It seems to be a rule of wisdom never to rely on your memory alone, scarcely even in acts of pure memory, but to bring the past for judgment into the thousand-eyed present, and live ever in a new day. In your metaphysics you have denied personality to the Deity, yet when the devout motions of the soul come, yield to them heart and life, though they should clothe God with shape and color. Leave your theory, as Joseph his coat in the hand of the harlot, and flee.

A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do. He may as well concern himself with his shadow on the wall. Speak what you think now in hard words and to-morrow speak what to-morrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict everything you said to-day. — "Ah, so you shall be sure to be misunderstood." — Is it so bad then to be misunderstood? Pythagoras was misunderstood, and Socrates, and Jesus, and Luther, and Copernicus, and Galileo, and Newton, and every pure and wise spirit that ever took flesh. To be great is to be misunderstood.

I suppose no man can violate his nature. All the sallies of his will are rounded in by the law of his being, as the inequalities of Andes and Himmaleh are insignificant in the curve of the sphere. Nor does it matter how you gauge and try him. A character is like an acrostic or Alexandrian stanza; — read it forward, backward, or across, it still spells the same thing. In this pleasing contrite wood-life which God allows me, let me record day by day my honest thought without prospect or retrospect, and, I cannot doubt, it will be found symmetrical, though I mean it not and see it not. My book should smell of pines and resound with the hum of insects. The swallow over my window should inter-

weave that thread or straw he carries in his bill into my web also. We pass for what we are. Character teaches above our wills. Men imagine that they communicate their virtue or vice only by overt actions, and do not see that virtue or vice emit a breath every moment.

There will be an agreement in whatever variety of actions, so they be each honest and natural in their hour. For of one will, the actions will be harmonious, however unlike they seem. These varieties are lost sight of at a little distance, at a little height of thought. One tendency unites them all. The voyage of the best ship is a zigzag line of a hundred tacks. See the line from a sufficient distance, and it strengthens itself to the average tendency. Your genuine action will explain itself and will explain your other genuine actions. Your conformity explains nothing. Act singly, and what you have already done singly will justify you now. Greatness appeals to the future. If I can be firm enough to-day to do right and scorn eyes, I must have done so much right before as to defend me now. Be it how it will, do right now. Always scorn appearances and you always may. The force of character is cumulative. All the foregone days of virtue work their health into this. What makes the majesty of the heroes of the senate and the field, which so fills the imagination? The consciousness of a train of great days and victories behind. They shed a united light on the advancing actor. He is attended as by a visible escort of angels. That is it which throws thunder into Chatham's voice, and dignity into Washington's port, and America into Adam's eye. Honor is venerable to us because it is no ephemera. It is always ancient virtue. We worship it to-day because it is not of to-day. We love it and pay it homage because it is not a trap for our love and homage, but is self-dependent, self-derived, and therefore of an old immaculate pedigree, even if shown in a young person.

I hope in these days we have heard the last of conformity and consistency. Let the words be gazetted and ridiculous henceforward. Instead of the gong for dinner, let us hear a whistle from the Spartan fife.

Let us never bow and apologize more. A great man is coming to eat at my house. I do not wish to please him, I wish that he should wish to please me. I will stand here for humanity, and though I would make it kind, I would make it true. Let us affront and reprimand the smooth mediocrity and squalid contentment of the times, and hurl in the face of custom and trade and office, the fact which is the upshot of all history, that there is a great responsible Thinker and Actor working wherever a man works; that a true man belongs to no other time or place, but is the centre of things. Where he is, there is nature. He measures you and all men and all events. Ordinarily, everybody in society reminds us of somewhat else, or of some other person. Character, reality, reminds you of nothing else; it takes place of the whole creation. The man must be so much

that he must make all circumstances indifferent. Every true man is a cause, a country, and an age, requires infinite spaces and numbers and time fully to accomplish his design; — and posterity seem to follow his steps as a train of clients. A man Caesar is born, and for ages after we have a Roman Empire. Christ is born, and millions of minds so grow and cleave to his genius that he is confounded with virtue and the possible of man. An institution is the lengthened shadow of one man, as, Monachism, of the Hermit Antony; the Reformation, of Luther; Quakerism, of Fox; Methodism, of Wesley; Abolition, of Clarkson. Scipio, Milton called "the height of Rome"; and all history resolves itself very easily into the biography of a few stout and earnest persons.

. . . . .

## Henry David Thoreau

(1817-1862)

THOREAU was the one Transcendentalist who was born in Concord, and his love for the place became the most powerful force in his life. He attended Harvard College but felt that he owed little to his formal education. He was the most widely read of the Concord group, had translated *Prometheus Bound*, and was thoroughly at home in Greek literature. Like his friends, he became a bitter foe of slavery, and it was while he was at Walden that he was arrested for refusing to pay his poll tax to a state which countenanced slavery.

No single formula can embrace all those who may fairly be called Transcendentalists. Thoreau had less interest in cosmic speculation than his friend, Emerson. But in his determination to find what things are truly important, and thereby challenge the prevailing standards, he belonged to the Concord group. His *Walden* is the record of the outstanding experiment in America of an individual trying to discover for himself an adequate scale of values. "Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in. I drink at it; but while I drink I see the sandy bottom and detect how shallow it is. Its thin current slides away, but eternity remains. I would drink deeper; fish in the sky, whose bottom is pebbly with stars." "If the day and the night are such that you greet them with joy, and life emits a fragrance like flowers and sweet-scented herbs, is more elastic, more starry, more immortal — that is your success." His essay on *Civil Disobedience* is an expression at once of his passion for justice and his own sharp individualism.

### CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE<sup>1</sup>

I HEARTILY accept the motto — "That government is best which governs least"; and I should like to see it acted up to more rapidly and systematically. Carried out, it finally amounts to this, which also I believe —

"That government is best which governs not at all"; and when men are prepared for it, that will be the kind of government which they will have. Government is at best but an expedient; but most governments are

<sup>1</sup> *Miscellanies*. *The Writings of Henry David Thoreau*, Riverside Edition, vol. x, pp. 131-34, 136-37, 138-40, 146-47, 149, 154-55, 169-70. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1893.



usually, and all governments are sometimes, inexpedient. The objections which have been brought against a standing army, and they are many and weighty, and deserve to prevail, may also at last be brought against a standing government. The standing army is only an arm of the standing government. The government itself, which is only the mode which the people have chosen to execute their will, is equally liable to be abused and perverted before the people can act through it. Witness the present Mexican War, the work of comparatively a few individuals using the standing government as their tool; for, in the outset, the people would not have consented to this measure.

This American government — what is it but a tradition, though a recent one, endeavoring to transmit itself unimpaired to posterity, but each instant losing some of its integrity? It has not the vitality and force of a single living man; for a single man can bend it to his will. It is a sort of wooden gun to the people themselves. But it is not the less necessary for this; for the people must have some complicated machinery or other, and hear its din, to satisfy that idea of government which they have. Governments show thus how successfully men can be imposed on, even impose on themselves, for their own advantage. It is excellent, we must all allow. Yet this government never of itself furthered any enterprise, but by the alacrity with which it got out of its way. *It* does not keep the country free. *It* does not settle the West. *It* does not educate. The character inherent in the American people has done all that has been accomplished; and it would have done somewhat more, if the government had not sometimes got in its way. For government is an expedient by which men would fain succeed in letting one another alone; and, as has been said, when it is most expedient, the governed are most let alone by it. Trade and commerce, if they were not made of India-rubber, would never manage to bounce over the obstacles which legislators are continually putting in their way; and, if one were to judge these men wholly by the effects of their actions and not partly by their intentions, they would de-

serve to be classed and punished with those mischievous persons who put obstructions on the railroads.

But, to speak practically and as a citizen, unlike those who call themselves no-government men, I ask for, not at once no government, but *at once* a better government. Let every man make known what kind of government would command his respect, and that will be one step toward obtaining it.

After all, the practical reason why, when the power is once in the hands of the people, a majority are permitted, and for a long period continue, to rule is not because they are most likely to be in the right, nor because this seems fairest to the minority, but because they are physically the strongest. But a government in which the majority rule in all cases cannot be based on justice, even as far as men understand it. Can there not be a government in which majorities do not virtually decide right and wrong, but conscience? — in which majorities decide only those questions to which the rule of expediency is applicable? Must the citizen ever for a moment, or in the least degree, resign his conscience to the legislator? Why has every man a conscience, then? I think that we should be men first, and subjects afterward. It is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law, so much as for the right. The only obligation which I have a right to assume is to do at any time what I think right. It is truly enough said, that a corporation has no conscience; but a corporation of conscientious men is a corporation *with* a conscience. Law never made men a whit more just; and, by means of their respect for it, even the well-disposed are daily made the agents of injustice. A common and natural result of an undue respect for law is, that you may see a file of soldiers, colonel, captain, corporal, privates, powder-monkeys, and all, marching in admirable order over hill and dale to the wars, against their wills, ay, against their common sense and consciences, which makes it very steep marching indeed, and produces a palpitation of the heart. They have no doubt that it is a damnable business in which they are concerned; they are all peaceably inclined. Now, what are they? Men at all? or small

movable forts and magazines, at the service of some unscrupulous man in power?

He who gives himself entirely to his fellow men appears to them useless and selfish; but he who gives himself partially to them is pronounced a benefactor and philanthropist.

How does it become a man to behave toward this American government to-day? I answer, that he cannot without disgrace be associated with it. I cannot for an instant recognize that political organization as *my* government which is the *slave's* government also.

All men recognize the right of revolution; that is, the right to refuse allegiance to, and to resist, the government, when its tyranny or its inefficiency are great and unendurable. But almost all say that such is not the case now. But such was the case, they think, in the Revolution of '75. If one were to tell me that this was a bad government because it taxed certain foreign commodities brought to its ports, it is most probable that I should not make an ado about it, for I can do without them. All machines have their friction; and possibly this does enough good to counterbalance the evil. At any rate, it is a great evil to make a stir about it. But when the friction comes to have its machine, and oppression and robbery are organized, I say, let us not have such a machine any longer. In other words, when a sixth of the population of a nation which has undertaken to be the refuge of liberty are slaves, and a whole country is unjustly overrun and conquered by a foreign army, and subjected to military law, I think that it is not too soon for honest men to rebel and revolutionize. What makes this duty the more urgent is the fact that the country so overrun is not our own, but ours is the invading army.

Practically speaking, the opponents to a reform in Massachusetts are not a hundred thousand politicians at the South, but a hundred thousand merchants and farmers here, who are more interested in commerce and agriculture than they are in humanity, and are not prepared to do justice to the slave and to Mexico, *cost what it may*. I quarrel

not with far-off foes, but with those who, near at home, co-operate with, and do the bidding of, those far away, and without whom the latter would be harmless. We are accustomed to say, that the mass of men are unprepared; but improvement is slow, because the few are not materially wiser or better than the many. It is not so important that many should be as good as you, as that there be some absolute goodness somewhere; for that will leaven the whole lump. There are thousands who are *in opinion* opposed to slavery and to the war, who yet in effect do nothing to put an end to them; who, esteeming themselves children of Washington and Franklin, sit down with their hands in their pockets, and say that they know not what to do, and do nothing; who even postpone the question of freedom to the question of free-trade, and quietly read the prices-current along with the latest advices from Mexico, after dinner, and, it may be, fall asleep over them both. What is the price-current of an honest man and patriot to-day? They hesitate, and they regret, and sometimes they petition; but they do nothing in earnest and with effect. They will wait, well disposed, for others to remedy the evil, that they may no longer have it to regret. At most, they give only a cheap vote, and a feeble countenance and God-speed, to the right, as it goes by them. There are nine hundred and ninety-nine patrons of virtue to one virtuous man. But it is easier to deal with the real possessor of a thing than with the temporary guardian of it.

All voting is a sort of gaming, like checkers or backgammon, with a slight moral tinge to it, a playing with right and wrong, with moral questions; and betting naturally accompanies it. The character of the voters is not staked. I cast my vote, perchance, as I think right; but I am not vitally concerned that that right should prevail. I am willing to leave it to the majority. Its obligation, therefore, never exceeds that of expediency. Even voting *for the right* is *doing* nothing for it. It is only expressing to men feebly your desire that it should prevail. A wise man will not leave the right to the mercy of chance, nor wish it to prevail through the

power of the majority. There is but little virtue in the action of masses of men. When the majority shall at length vote for the abolition of slavery, it will be because they are indifferent to slavery, or because there is but little slavery left to be abolished by their vote. *They* will then be the only slaves. Only *his* vote can hasten the abolition of slavery who asserts his own freedom by his vote.

As for adopting the ways which the state has provided for remedying the evil, I know not of such ways. They take too much time, and a man's life will be gone. I have other affairs to attend to. I came into this world, not chiefly to make this a good place to live in, but to live in it, be it good or bad. A man has not everything to do, but something; and because he cannot do *everything*, it is not necessary that he should do *something* wrong. It is not my business to be petitioning the Governor or the Legislature any more than it is theirs to petition me; and if they should not hear my petition, what should I do then? But in this case the state has provided no way: its very Constitution is the evil. This may seem to be harsh and stubborn and unconciliatory; but it is to treat with the utmost kindness and consideration the only spirit that can appreciate or deserves it. So is all change for the better, like birth and death, which convulse the body.

I do not hesitate to say, that those who call themselves Abolitionists should at once effectually withdraw their support, both in person and property, from the government of Massachusetts, and not wait till they constitute a majority of one, before they suffer the right to prevail through them. I think that it is enough if they have God on their side, without waiting for that other one. Moreover, any man more right than his neighbors constitutes a majority of one already.

Under a government which imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also a prison. The proper place to-day, the only place which Massachusetts has provided for her freer and less desponding spirits, is in her

prisons, to be put out and locked out of the State by her own act, as they have already put themselves out by their principles. It is there that the fugitive slave, and the Mexican prisoner on parole, and the Indian come to plead the wrongs of his race should find them: on that separate, but more free and honorable ground, where the State places those who are not *with* her, but *against* her — the only house in a slave State in which a free man can abide with honor. If any think that their influence would be lost there, and their voices no longer afflict the ear of the State, that they would not be as an enemy within its walls, they do not know by how much truth is stronger than error, nor how much more eloquently and effectively he can combat injustice who has experienced a little in his own person.

I have paid no poll-tax for six years. I was put into a jail once on this account, for one night; and, as I stood considering the walls of solid stone, two or three feet thick, the door of wood and iron, a foot thick, and the iron grating which strained the light, I could not help being struck with the foolishness of that institution which treated me as if I were mere flesh and blood and bones, to be locked up. I wondered that it should have concluded at length that this was the best use it could put me to, and had never thought to avail itself of my services in some way.

The authority of government, even such as I am willing to submit to — for I will cheerfully obey those who know and can do better than I, and in many things even those who neither know nor can do so well — is still an impure one: to be strictly just, it must have the sanction and consent of the governed. It can have no pure right over my person and property, but what I concede to it. The progress from an absolute to a limited monarchy to a democracy, is a progress toward a true respect for the individual. Even the Chinese philosopher was wise enough to regard the individual as the basis of the empire. Is a democracy, such as we know it, the last improvement possible in government? Is it not possible to take a step

further towards recognizing and organizing the rights of man? There will never be a really free and enlightened State until the State comes to recognize the individual as a higher and independent power, from which all its own power and authority are derived, and treats him accordingly. I please myself with imagining a State at last which can afford to be just to all men, and to treat the individual with respect as a neighbor; which

even would not think it inconsistent with its own repose if a few were to live aloof from it, not meddling with it, nor embraced by it, who fulfilled all the duties of neighbors and fellow men. A state which bore this kind of fruit, and suffered it to drop off as fast as it ripened, would prepare the way for a still more perfect and glorious State, which also I have imagined, but not yet anywhere seen.

# Walt Whitman

(1819-1892)

WALT WHITMAN grew up on Long Island. He early went into newspaper work, and for some years was on the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*. During the Civil War he served as nurse in a Washington Hospital, and later was a government clerk. He published the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* in 1855.

It was Whitman's discovery of Emerson's theory of self-reliance which unified his thought, and which justifies his inclusion with the Transcendentalists. His outstanding characteristic was a profound belief in democracy, almost mystical in intensity. Yet this faith did not blind him to the inadequacies of American life nor still his criticism of its materialism. *Democratic Vistas* represents in prose the same ideals and values which were poetically expressed in *Leaves of Grass*.

## DEMOCRATIC VISTAS<sup>1</sup>

AS THE greatest lessons of Nature through the universe are perhaps the lessons of variety and freedom, the same present the greatest lessons also in New World politics and progress. If a man were asked, for instance, the distinctive points contrasting modern European and American political and other life with the old Asiatic cultus, as lingering-bequeathed yet in China and Turkey, he might find the amount of them in John Stuart Mill's profound essay on Liberty in the future, where he demands two main constituents, or sub-strata, for a truly grand nationality — 1st, a large variety of character — 2d, full play for human nature to expand itself in numberless and even conflicting directions — (seems to be for general human-

ity much like the influences that make up, in their limitless field, that perennial health-action of the air we call the weather — an infinite number of currents and forces, and contributions, and temperatures, and cross-purposes, whose ceaseless play of counterpart upon counterpart brings constant restoration and vitality). With this thought — and not for itself alone, but all it necessitates, and draws after it — let me begin my speculations.

America, filling the present with greatest deeds and problems, cheerfully accepting the past, including feudalism, (as, indeed, the present is but the legitimate birth of the past, including feudalism,) counts, as I reckon, for her justification and success, (for who, as

<sup>1</sup> *The Complete Works of Walt Whitman: Prose*, Paumonock edition, vol. II, pp. 49-63. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1902.

yet, dare claim success?) almost entirely on the future. Nor is that hope unwarranted.

To-day, ahead, though dimly yet, we see, in vistas, a copious, sane, gigantic offspring. For our New World I consider far less important for what it has done, or what it is, than for results to come. Sole among nationalities, these States have assumed the task to put in forms of lasting power and practicality, on areas of amplitude rivaling the operations of the physical kosmos, the moral political speculations of ages, long, long deferred, the democratic republican principle, and the theory of development and perfection by voluntary standards, and self-reliance. Who else, indeed, except the United States, in history, so far, have accepted in unwitting faith, and, as we now see, stand, act upon, and go security for, these things?

But precluding no longer, let me strike the key-note of the following strain. First premising that, though the passages of it have been written at widely different times, (it is, in fact, a collection of memoranda, perhaps for future designers, comprehenders,) and though it may be open to the charge of one part contradicting another — for there are opposite sides to the great question of democracy, as to every great question — I feel the parts harmoniously blended in my own realization and convictions, and present them to be read only in such oneness, each page and each claim and assertion modified and tempered by the others. Bear in mind, too, that they are not the result of studying up in political economy, but of the ordinary sense, observing, wandering among men, these States, these stirring years of war and peace. I will not gloss over the appalling dangers of universal suffrage in the United States. In fact, it is to admit and face these dangers I am writing. To him or her within whose thought rages the battle, advancing, retreating, between democracy's convictions, aspirations, and the people's crudeness, vice, caprices, I mainly write this essay. I shall use the words America and democracy as convertible terms. Not an ordinary one is the issue. The United States are destined either to surmount the gorgeous history of

feudalism, or else prove the most tremendous failure of time. Not the least doubtful am I on any prospects of their material success. The triumphant future of their business, geographic and productive departments on larger scales and in more varieties than ever, is certain. In those respects the republic must soon (if she does not already) outstrip all examples hitherto afforded, and dominate the world.

Admitting all this, with the priceless value of our political institutions, general suffrage, (and fully acknowledging the latest, widest opening of the doors,) I say that, far deeper than these, what finally and only is to make of our western world a nationality superior to any hither known, and out-topping the past, must be vigorous, yet unsuspected Literatures, perfect personalities and sociologies, original, transcendental, and expressing (what, in highest sense, are not yet expressed at all), democracy and the modern. With these, and out of these, I promulge new races of Teachers, and of perfect Women, indispensable to endow the birth-stock of a New World. For feudalism, caste, the ecclesiastic traditions, though palpably retreating from political institutions, still hold essentially, by their spirit, even in this country, entire possession of the more important fields, indeed the very subsoil, of education, and of social standards and literature.

I say that democracy can never prove itself beyond cavil, until it founds and luxuriantly grows its own forms of art, poems, schools, theology, displacing all that exists, or that has been produced anywhere in the past, under opposite influences. It is curious to me that while so many voices, pens, minds in the press, lecture-rooms, in our Congress, etc., are discussing intellectual topics, pecuniary dangers, legislative problems, the suffrage, tariff and labor questions, and the various business and benevolent needs of America, with propositions, remedies, often worth deep attention, there is one need, a hiatus the profoundest, that no eye seems to perceive, no voice to state. Our fundamental want to-day in the United States, with closest, amplest reference to present conditions, and to the future, is of a class, and the clear idea

of a class, of native authors, *littérateurs*, far different, far higher in grade than any yet known, sacerdotal, modern, fit to cope with our occasions, lands, permeating the whole mass of American mentality, taste, belief, breathing into it a new breath of life, giving it decision, affecting politics far more than the popular superficial suffrage, with results inside and underneath the elections of Presidents or Congresses — radiating, begetting appropriate teachers, schools, manners, and, as its grandest result, accomplishing, (what neither the schools nor the churches and their clergy have hitherto accomplished, and without which this nation will no more stand, permanently, soundly, than a house will stand without a substratum,) a religious and moral character beneath the political and productive and intellectual bases of the States. For know you not, dear, earnest reader, that the people of our land may all read and write, and may all possess the right to vote — and yet the main things may be entirely lacking? — (and this to suggest them.)

Viewed, to-day, from a point of view sufficiently over-arching, the problem of humanity all over the civilized world is social and religious, and is to be finally met and treated by literature. The priest departs, the divine literatus comes. Never was anything more wanted than, to-day, and here in the States, the poet of the modern is wanted, or the great literatus of the modern. At all times, perhaps, the central point in any nation, and that whence it is itself really swayed the most, and whence it sways others, is its national literature, especially its archetypal poems. Above all previous lands, a great original literature is surely to become the justification and reliance, (in some respects the sole reliance,) of American democracy.

Few are aware how the great literature penetrates all, gives hue to all, shapes aggregates and individuals, and after subtle ways, with irresistible power, constructs, sustains, demolishes at will. Why tower, in reminiscence, above all the nations of the earth, two special lands, petty in themselves, yet inexpressibly gigantic, beautiful, columnar? Immortal Judah lives, and Greece immortal lives, in a couple of poems.

Nearer than this. It is not generally realized, but it is true, as the genius of Greece, and all the sociology, personality, politics, and religion of those wonderful states, resided in their literature or esthetics, that what was afterwards the main support of European chivalry, the feudal, ecclesiastical, dynastic world over there — forming its osseous structure, holding it together for hundreds, thousands of years, preserving its flesh and bloom, giving it form, decision, rounding it out, and so saturating it in the conscious and unconscious blood, breed, belief, and intuitions of men, that it still prevails powerful to this day, in defiance of the mighty changes of time — was its literature, permeating to the very marrow, especially that major part, its enchanting songs, ballads, and poems.

To the ostent of the senses and eyes, I know, the influences which stamp the world's history are wars, uprisings or downfalls of dynasties, changeful movements of trade, important inventions, navigation, military or civil governments, advent of powerful personalities, conquerors, etc. These of course play their part; yet, it may be, a single new thought, imagination, abstract principle, even literary style, fit for the time, put in shape by some great literatus, and projected among mankind, may duly cause changes, growths, removals, greater than the longest and bloodiest war, or the most stupendous merely political, dynastic, or commercial overturn.

In short, as, though it may not be realized, it is strictly true, that a few first-class poets, philosophers, and authors, have substantially settled and given status to the entire religion, education, law, sociology, etc., of the hitherto civilized world, by tingeing and often creating the atmospheres out of which they have arisen, such also must stamp, and more than ever stamp, the interior and real democratic construction of this American continent, to-day, and days to come. Remember also this fact of difference, that, while through the antique and through the mediæval ages, highest thoughts and ideals realized themselves, and their expression made its way by other arts, as much as, or even

more than by, technical literature, (not open to the mass of persons, or even to the majority of eminent persons,) such literature in our day and for current purposes, is not only more eligible than all the other arts put together, but has become the only general means of morally influencing the world. Painting, sculpture, and the dramatic theatre, it would seem, no longer play an indispensable or even important part in the workings and mediumship of intellect, utility, or even high esthetics. Architecture remains, doubtless with capacities, and a real future. Then music, the combiner, nothing more spiritual, nothing more sensuous, a god, yet completely human, advances, prevails, holds highest place; supplying in certain wants and quarters what nothing else could supply. Yet in the civilization of to-day it is undeniable that, over all the arts, literature dominates, serves beyond all — shapes the character of church and school — or, at any rate, is capable of doing so. Including the literature of science, its scope is indeed unparalleled.

Before proceeding further, it were perhaps well to discriminate on certain points. Literature tills its crops in many fields, and some may flourish, while others lag. What I say in these Vistas has its main bearing on imaginative literature, especially poetry, the stock of all. In the department of science, and the specialty of journalism, there appear, in these States, promises, perhaps fulfilments, of highest earnestness, reality, and life. These, of course, are modern. But in the region of imaginative, spinal and essential attributes, something equivalent to creation is, for our age and lands, imperatively demanded. For not only is it not enough that the new blood, new frame of democracy shall be vivified and held together merely by political means, superficial suffrage, legislation, etc., but it is clear to me that, unless it goes deeper, gets at least as firm and as warm a hold in men's hearts, emotions and belief, as, in their days, feudalism or ecclesiasticism, and inaugurates its own perennial sources, welling from the centre forever, its strength will be defective, its growth doubtful, and its main charm wanting. I suggest, therefore, the possibility, should some two or three really original

American poets, (perhaps artists or lecturers,) arise, mounting the horizon like planets, stars of the first magnitude, that, from their eminence, fusing contributions, races, far localities, etc., together, they would give more compaction and more moral identity, (the quality to-day most needed,) to these States, than all its Constitutions, legislative and judicial ties, and all its hitherto political, warlike, or materialistic experiences. As, for instance, there could hardly happen anything that would more serve the States, with all their variety of origins, their diverse climes, cities, standards, etc., than possessing an aggregate of heroes, characters, exploits, sufferings, prosperity or misfortune, glory or disgrace, common to all, typical of all — no less, but even greater would it be to possess the aggregation of a cluster of mighty poets, artists, teachers, fit for us, national expressers, comprehending and effusing for the men and women of the States, what is universal, native, common to all, inland and seaboard, northern and southern. The historians say of ancient Greece, with her ever-jealous autonomies, cities, and states, that the only positive unity she ever owned or received, was the sad unity of a common subjection, at the last, to foreign conquerors. Subjection, aggregation of that sort, is impossible to America; but the fear of conflicting and irreconcilable interiors, and the lack of a common skeleton, knitting all close, continually haunts me. Or, if it does not, nothing is plainer than the need, a long period to come, of a fusion of the States into the only reliable identity, the moral and artistic one. For, I say, the true nationality of the States, the genuine union, when we come to a mortal crisis, is, and is to be, after all, neither the written law, nor, (as is generally supposed,) either self-interest, or common pecuniary or material objects — but the fervid and tremendous IDEA, melting everything else with resistless heat, and solving all lesser and definite distinctions in vast, indefinite, spiritual, emotional power.

It may be claimed, (and I admit the weight of the claim,) that common and general worldly prosperity, and a populace well-to-do, and with all life's material comforts, is



the main thing, and is enough. It may be argued that our republic is, in performance, really enacting to-day the grandest arts, poems, etc., by beating up the wilderness into fertile farms, and in her railroads, ships, machinery, etc. And it may be asked, Are these not better, indeed, for America, than any utterances even of greatest rhapsode, artist, or literatus?

I too hail those achievements with pride and joy: then answer that the soul of man will not with such only — nay, not with such at all — be finally satisfied; but needs what, (standing on these and on all things, as the feet stand on the ground,) is addressed to the loftiest, to itself alone.

Out of such considerations, such truths, arises for treatment in these Vistas the important question of character, of an American stock-personality, with literatures and arts for outlets and return-expressions, and, of course, to correspond, within outlines common to all. To these, the main affair, the thinkers of the United States, in general so acute, have either given feeblest attention, or have remained, and remain, in a state of somnolence.

For my part, I would alarm and caution even the political and business reader, and to the utmost extent, against the prevailing delusion that the establishment of free political institutions, and plentiful intellectual smartness, with general good order, physical plenty, industry, etc., (desirable and precious advantages as they all are) do, of themselves, determine and yield to our experiment of democracy the fruitage of success. With such advantages at present fully, or almost fully, possessed — the Union just issued, victorious, from the struggle with the only foes it need ever fear, (namely, those within itself the interior ones,) and with unprecedented materialistic advancement — society, in these States, is cankered, crude, superstitious, and rotten. Political, or law-made society is, and private, or voluntary society, is also. In any vigor, the element of the moral conscience, the most important, the verteber to State or man, seems to me either entirely lacking, or seriously enfeebled or ungrown.

I say we had best look our times and lands

searchingly in the face, like a physician diagnosing some deep disease. Never was there, perhaps, more hollowness at heart than at present, and here in the United States. Genuine belief seems to have left us. The underlying principles of the States are not honestly believed in, (for all this hectic glow, and these melodramatic screamings,) nor is humanity itself believed in. What penetrating eye does not everywhere see through the mask? The spectacle is appalling. We live in an atmosphere of hypocrisy throughout. The men believe not in the women, nor the women in the men. A scornful superciliousness rules in literature. The aim of all *littérateurs* is to find something to make fun of. A lot of churches, sects, etc., the most dismal phantasms I know, usurp the name of religion. Conversation is a mass of badinage. From deceit in the spirit, the mother of all false deeds, the offspring is already incalculable. An acute and candid person, in the revenue department in Washington, who is led by the course of his employment to regularly visit the cities, north, south, and west, to investigate frauds, has talked much with me about his discoveries. The depravity of the business classes of our country is not less than has been supposed, but infinitely greater. The official services of America, national, state, and municipal, in all their branches and departments, except the judiciary, are saturated in corruption, bribery, falsehood, mal-administration; and the judiciary is tainted. The great cities reek with respectable as much as non-respectable robbery and scoundrelism. In fashionable life, flippancy, tepid amours, weak infidelism, small aims, or no aims at all, only to kill time. In business, (this all-devouring modern word, business,) the one sole object is, by any means, pecuniary gain. The magician's serpent in the fable ate up all the other serpents, and money-making is our magician's serpent, remaining to-day sole master of the field. The best class we show, is but a mob of fashionably dressed speculators and vulgarians. True, indeed, behind this fantastic farce, enacted on the visible stage of society, solid things and stupendous labors are to be discovered, existing crudely and going on in

the background, to advance and tell themselves in time. Yet the truths are none the less terrible. I say that our New World democracy, however great a success in uplifting the masses out of their sloughs, in materialistic development, products, and in certain highly deceptive superficial popular intellectuality, is, so far, an almost complete failure in its social aspects, and in really grand religious, moral, literary, and esthetic

results. In vain do we march with unprecedented strides to empire so colossal, out-vying the antique, beyond Alexander's, beyond the proudest sway of Rome. In vain have we annexed Texas, California, Alaska, and reach north for Canada and south for Cuba. It is as if we were somehow being endowed with a vast and more and more thoroughly-appointed body, and then left with little or no soul.

# George Santayana

(1863- )

THE student is referred to page 453 for a more detailed account of the work of Santayana, as well as for other selections from his work. *The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy* is included at this point because it is one of the most incisive and famous criticisms of Transcendentalism that we have. More than that, however, it is a study of the entire philosophical tradition in America, and as such worthy to be borne in mind as one goes from Emerson to Royce and James.

## THE GENTEEL TRADITION IN AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY<sup>1</sup>

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, — The privilege of addressing you to-day is very welcome to me, not merely for the honor of it, which is great, nor for the pleasures of travel, which are many, when it is California that one is visiting for the first time, but also because there is something I have long wanted to say which this occasion seems particularly favorable for saying. America is still a young country, and this part of it is especially so; and it would have been nothing extraordinary if, in this young country, material preoccupations had altogether absorbed people's minds, and they had been too much engrossed in living to reflect upon life, or to have any philosophy. The opposite, however, is the case. Not only have you already found time to philosophize in California, as your society proves, but the eastern colonists from the very beginning were a sophisticated

race. As much as in clearing the land and fighting the Indians they were occupied, as they expressed it, in wrestling with the Lord. The country was new, but the race was tried, chastened, and full of solemn memories. It was an old wine in new bottles; and America did not have to wait for its present universities, with their departments of academic philosophy, in order to possess a living philosophy — to have a distinct, vision of the universe and definite convictions about human destiny.

Now this situation is a singular and remarkable one, and has many consequences, not all of which are equally fortunate. America is a young country with an old mentality: it has enjoyed the advantages of a child carefully brought up and thoroughly indoctrinated; it has been a wise child. But a wise child, an old head on young shoul-

<sup>1</sup> Address delivered before the Philosophical Union of the University of California, August 25, 1911. *Winds of Doctrine*. New York, 1912. Reprinted with the permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

ders, always has a comic and an unpromising side. The wisdom is a little thin and verbal, not aware of its full meaning and grounds, and physical and emotional growth may be stunted by it, or even deranged. Or when the child is too vigorous for that, he will develop a fresh mentality of his own, out of his observations and actual instincts; and this fresh mentality will interfere with the traditional mentality, and tend to reduce it to something perfunctory, conventional, and perhaps secretly despised. A philosophy is not genuine unless it inspires and expresses the life of those who cherish it. I do not think the hereditary philosophy of America has done much to atrophy the natural activities of the inhabitants; the wise child has not missed the joys of youth or of manhood; but what has happened is that the hereditary philosophy has grown stale, and that the academic philosophy afterwards developed has caught the stale odor from it. America is not simply, as I said a moment ago, a young country with an old mentality: it is a country with two mentalities, one a survival of the beliefs and standards of the fathers, the other an expression of the instincts, practice, and discoveries of the younger generations.

In all the higher things of the mind — in religion, in literature, in the moral emotions — it is the hereditary spirit that still prevails, so much so that Mr. Bernard Shaw finds that America is a hundred years behind the times. The truth is that one-half of the American mind, that not occupied intensely in practical affairs, has remained, I will not say high-and-dry, but slightly becalmed; it has floated gently in the back-water, while, alongside, in invention and industry and social organization, the other half of the mind was leaping down a sort of Niagara Rapids. This division may be found symbolized in American architecture: a neat reproduction of the colonial mansion — with some modern comforts introduced surreptitiously — stands beside the skyscraper. The American Will inhabits the skyscraper; the American Intellect inhabits the colonial mansion. The one is the sphere of the American man; the other, at least predomi-

nantly, of the American woman. The one is all aggressive enterprise; the other is all genteel tradition.

Now, with your permission, I should like to analyze more fully how this interesting situation has arisen, how it is qualified, and whither it tends. And in the first place we should remember what, precisely, that philosophy was which the first settlers brought with them into the country. In strictness there was more than one, but we may confine our attention to what I will call Calvinism, since it is on this that the current academic philosophy has been grafted. I do not mean exactly the Calvinism of Calvin, or even of Jonathan Edwards, for in their systems there was much that was not pure philosophy, but rather faith in the externals and history of revelation. Jewish and Christian revelation was interpreted by these men, however, in the spirit of a particular philosophy, which might have arisen under any sky, and been associated with any other religion as well as with Protestant Christianity. In fact, the philosophical principle of Calvinism appears also in the Koran, in Spinoza, and in Cardinal Newman; and persons with no very distinctive Christian belief, like Carlyle or like Professor Royce, may be nevertheless, philosophically, perfect Calvinists. Calvinism, taken in this sense, is an expression of the agonized conscience. It is a view of the world which an agonized conscience readily embraces, if it takes itself seriously, as, being agonized, of course it must. Calvinism, essentially, asserts three things: that sin exists, that sin is punished, and that it is beautiful that sin should exist to be punished. The heart of the Calvinist is therefore divided between tragic concern at his own miserable condition, and tragic exultation about the universe at large. He oscillates between a profound abasement and a paradoxical elation of the spirit. To be a Calvinist philosophically is to feel a fierce pleasure in the existence of misery, especially of one's own, in that this misery seems to manifest the fact that the Absolute is irresponsible or infinite or holy. Human nature, it feels, is totally depraved: to have the instincts and motives that we necessarily have is a great scandal,

and we must suffer for it; but that scandal is requisite, since otherwise the serious importance of being as we ought to be would not have been vindicated.

To those of us who have not an agonized conscience this system may seem fantastic and even unintelligible; yet it is logically and intently thought out from its emotional premises. It can take permanent possession of a deep mind here and there, and under certain conditions it can become epidemic. Imagine, for instance, a small nation with an intense vitality, but on the verge of ruin, ecstatic and distressful, having a strict and minute code of laws, that paints life in sharp and violent chiaroscuro, all pure righteousness and black abominations, and exaggerating the consequences of both perhaps to infinity. Such a people were the Jews after the exile, and again the early Protestants. If such a people is philosophical at all, it will not improbably be Calvinistic. Even in the early American communities many of these conditions were fulfilled. The nation was small and isolated; it lived under pressure and constant trial; it was acquainted with but a small range of goods and evils. Vigilance over conduct and an absolute demand for personal integrity were not merely traditional things, but things that practical sages, like Franklin and Washington, recommended to their countrymen, because they were virtues that justified themselves visibly by their fruits. But soon these happy results themselves helped to relax the pressure of external circumstances, and indirectly the pressure of the agonized conscience within. The nation became numerous; it ceased to be either ecstatic or distressful; the high social morality which on the whole it preserved took another color; people remained honest and helpful out of good sense and good will rather than out of scrupulous adherence to any fixed principles. They retained their instinct for order, and often created order with surprising quickness; but the sanctity of law, to be obeyed for its own sake, began to escape them; it seemed too unpractical a notion, and not quite serious. In fact, the second and native-born American mentality began to take shape. The sense of sin totally evaporated. Nature, in the words

of Emerson, was all beauty and commodity; and while operating on it laboriously, and drawing quick returns, the American began to drink in inspiration from it aesthetically. At the same time, in so broad a continent, he had elbow-room. His neighbors helped more than they hindered him; he wished their number to increase. Good will became the great American virtue; and a passion arose for counting heads, and square miles, and cubic feet, and minutes saved — as if there had been anything to save them for. How strange to the American now that saying of Jonathan Edwards, that men are naturally God's enemies! Yet that is an axiom to any intelligent Calvinist, though the words he uses may be different. If you told the modern American that he is totally depraved, he would think you were joking, as he himself usually is. He is convinced that he always has been, and always will be, victorious and blameless.

Calvinism thus lost its basis in American life. Some emotional natures, indeed, reverted in their religious revivals or private searchings of heart to the sources of the tradition; for any of the radical points of view in philosophy may cease to be prevalent, but none can cease to be possible. Other natures, more sensitive to the moral and literary influences of the world, preferred to abandon parts of their philosophy, hoping thus to reduce the distance which should separate the remainder from real life.

Meantime, if anybody arose with a special sensibility or a technical genius, he was in great straits; not being fed sufficiently by the world, he was driven in upon his own resources. The three American writers whose personal endowment was perhaps the finest — Poe, Hawthorne, and Emerson — had all a certain starved and abstract quality. They could not retail the genteel tradition; they were too keen, too perceptive, and too independent for that. But life offered them little digestible material, nor were they naturally voracious. They were fastidious, and under the circumstances they were starved. Emerson, to be sure, fed on books. There was a great catholicity in his reading; and he showed a fine tact in his comments, and in

his way of appropriating what he read. But he read transcendently, not historically, to learn what he himself felt, not what others might have felt before him. And to feed on books, for a philosopher or a poet, is still to starve. Books can help him to acquire form, or to avoid pitfalls; they cannot supply him with substance, if he is to have any. Therefore the genius of Poe and Hawthorne, and even of Emerson, was employed on a sort of inner play, or digestion of vacancy. It was a refined labor, but it was in danger of being morbid, or tinkling, or self-indulgent. It was a play of intra-mental rhymes. Their mind was like an old music-box, full of tender echoes and quaint fancies. These fancies expressed their personal genius sincerely, as dreams may; but they were arbitrary fancies in comparison with what a real observer would have said in the premises. Their manner, in a word, was subjective. In their own persons they escaped the mediocrity of the genteel tradition, but they supplied nothing to supplant it in other minds.

The churches, likewise, although they modified their spirit, had no philosophy to offer save a new emphasis on parts of what Calvinism contained. The theology of Calvin, we must remember, had much in it besides philosophical Calvinism. A Christian tenderness, and a hope of grace for the individual, came to mitigate its sardonic optimism; and it was these evangelical elements that the Calvinistic churches now emphasized, seldom and with blushes referring to hell-fire or infant damnation. Yet philosophic Calvinism, with a theory of life that would perfectly justify hell-fire and infant damnation if they happened to exist, still dominates the traditional metaphysics. It is an ingredient, and the decisive ingredient, in what calls itself idealism. But in order to see just what part Calvinism plays in current idealism, it will be necessary to distinguish the other chief element in that complex system, namely, transcendentalism.

Transcendentalism is the philosophy which the romantic era produced in Germany, and independently, I believe, in America also. Transcendentalism proper, like romanticism, is not any particular set of dogmas about

what things exist; it is not a system of the universe regarded as a fact, or as a collection of facts. It is a method, a point of view, from which any world, no matter what it might contain, could be approached by a self-conscious observer. Transcendentalism is systematic subjectivism. It studies the perspectives of knowledge as they radiate from the self, it is a plan of those avenues of inference by which our ideas of things must be reached, if they are to afford any systematic or distant vistas. In other words, transcendentalism is the critical logic of science. Knowledge, it says, has a station, as in a watch-tower; it is always seated here and now, in the self of the moment. The past and the future, things inferred and things conceived, lie around it, painted as upon a panorama. They cannot be lighted up save by some centrifugal ray of attention and present interest, by some active operation of the mind.

This is hardly the occasion for developing or explaining this delicate insight; suffice it to say, lest you should think later that I disparage transcendentalism, that as a method I regard it as correct and, when once suggested, unforgettable. I regard it as the chief contribution made in modern times to speculation. But it is a method only, an attitude we may always assume if we like and that will always be legitimate. It is no answer, and involves no particular answer, to the question: What exists; in what order is what exists produced; what is to exist in the future? This question must be answered by observing the object, and tracing humbly the movement of the object. It cannot be answered at all by harping on the fact that this object, if discovered, must be discovered by somebody, and by somebody who has an interest in discovering it. Yet the Germans who first gained the full transcendental insight were romantic people; they were more or less frankly poets; they were colossal egotists, and wished to make not only their own knowledge but the whole universe centre about themselves. And full as they were of their romantic isolation and romantic liberty, it occurred to them to imagine that all reality might be a transcendental self and a romantic dreamer like themselves; nay, that it might

be just their own transcendental self and their own romantic dreams extended indefinitely. Transcendental logic, the method of discovery for the mind, was to become also the method of evolution in nature and history. Transcendental method, so abused, produced transcendental myth. A conscientious critique of knowledge was turned into a sham system of nature. We must therefore distinguish sharply the transcendental grammar of the intellect, which is significant and potentially correct, from the various transcendental systems of the universe, which are chimeras.

In both its parts, however, transcendentalism had much to recommend it to American philosophers, for the transcendental method appealed to the individualistic and revolutionary temper of their youth, while transcendental myths enabled them to find a new status for their inherited theology, and to give what parts of it they cared to preserve some semblance of philosophical backing. This last was the use to which the transcendental method was put by Kant himself, who first brought it into vogue, before the terrible weapon had got out of hand, and become the instrument of pure romanticism. Kant came, he himself said, to remove knowledge in order to make room for faith, which in his case meant faith in Calvinism. In other words, he applied the transcendental method to matters of fact, reducing them thereby to human ideas, in order to give to the Calvinistic postulates of conscience a metaphysical validity. For Kant had a genteel tradition of his own, which he wished to remove to a place of safety, feeling that the empirical world had become too hot for it; and this place of safety was the region of transcendental myth. I need hardly say how perfectly this expedient suited the needs of philosophers in America, and it is no accident if the influence of Kant soon became dominant here. To embrace this philosophy was regarded as a sign of profound metaphysical insight, although the most mediocre minds found no difficulty in embracing it. In truth it was a sign of having been brought up in the genteel tradition, of feeling it weak, and of wishing to save it.

] But the transcendental method, in its way, was also sympathetic to the American mind. It embodied, in a radical form, the spirit of Protestantism as distinguished from its inherited doctrines; it was autonomous, undismayed, calmly revolutionary; it felt that Will was deeper than Intellect; it focussed everything here and now, and asked all things to show their credentials at the bar of the young self, and to prove their value for this latest born moment. These things are truly American; they would be characteristic of any young society with a keen and discursive intelligence, and they are strikingly exemplified in the thought and in the person of Emerson. They constitute what he called self-trust. Self-trust, like other transcendental attitudes, may be expressed in metaphysical fables. The romantic spirit may imagine itself to be an absolute force, evoking and molding the plastic world to express its varying moods. But for a pioneer who is actually a world-builder this metaphysical illusion has a partial warrant in historical fact; far more warrant than it could boast of in the fixed and articulated society of Europe, among the moonstruck rebels and sulking poets of the romantic era. Emerson was a shrewd Yankee, by instinct on the winning side; he was a cheery, child-like soul, impervious to the evidence of evil, as of everything that it did not suit his transcendental individuality to appreciate or to notice. More, perhaps, than anybody that has ever lived, he practiced the transcendental method in all its purity. He had no system. He opened his eyes on the world every morning with a fresh sincerity, marking how things seemed to him then, or what they suggested to his spontaneous fancy. This fancy, for being spontaneous, was not always novel; it was guided by the habits and training of his mind, which were those of a preacher. Yet he never insisted on his notions so as to turn them into settled dogmas; he felt in his bones that they were myths. Sometimes, indeed, the bad example of other transcendentalists, less true than he to their method, or the pressing questions of unintelligent people, or the instinct we all have to think our ideas final, led him to the

very verge of system-making; but he stopped short. Had he made a system out of his notion of compensation, or the over-soul, or spiritual laws, the result would have been as thin and forced as it is in other transcendental systems. But he coveted truth, and he returned to experience, to history, to poetry, to the natural science of his day, for new starting-points and hints toward fresh transcendental musings.

To covet truth is a very distinguished passion. Every philosopher says he is pursuing the truth, but this is seldom the case. As Mr. Bertrand Russell has observed, one reason why philosophers often fail to reach the truth is that often they do not desire to reach it. Those who are genuinely concerned in discovering what happens to be true are rather the men of science, the naturalists, the historians; and ordinarily they discover it, according to their lights. The truths they find are never complete, and are not always important; but they are integral parts of the truth, facts and circumstances that help to fill in the picture, and that no later interpretation can invalidate or afford to contradict. But professional philosophers are usually only apologists: that is, they are absorbed in defending some vested illusion or some eloquent idea. Like lawyers or detectives, they study the case for which they are retained, to see how much evidence or semblance of evidence they can gather for the defense, and how much prejudice they can raise against the witnesses for the prosecution; for they know they are defending prisoners suspected by the world, and perhaps by their own good sense, of falsification. They do not covet truth, but victory and the dispelling of their own doubts. What they defend is some system, that is, some view about the totality of things, of which men are actually ignorant. No system would have ever been framed if people had been simply interested in knowing what is true, whatever it may be. What produces systems is the interest in maintaining against all comers that some favorite or inherited idea of ours is sufficient and right. A system may contain an account of many things which, in detail, are true enough; but as a

system, covering infinite possibilities that neither our experience nor our logic can prejudge, it must be a work of imagination and a piece of human soliloquy. It may be expressive of human experience, it may be poetical, but how should anyone who really coveted truth suppose that it was true?

Emerson had no system; and his coveting truth had another exceptional consequence: he was detached, unworldly, contemplative. When he came out of the conventicle or the reform meeting, or out of the rapturous close atmosphere of the lecture-room, he heard Nature whispering to him: "Why so hot, little sir?" No doubt the spirit or energy of the world is what is acting in us, as the sea is what rises in every little wave; but it passes through us, and cry out as we may, it will move on. Our privilege is to have perceived it as it moves. Our dignity is not in what we do, but in what we understand. The whole world is doing things. We are turning in that vortex; yet within us is silent observation, the speculative eye before which all passes, which bridges the distances and compares the combatants. On this side of his genius Emerson broke away from all conditions of age or country and represented nothing except intelligence itself.

There was another element in Emerson, curiously combined with transcendentalism, namely, his love and respect for Nature. Nature, for the transcendentalist, is precious because it is his own work, a mirror in which he looks at himself and says (like a poet relishing his own verses), "What a genius I am! Who would have thought there was such stuff in me?" And the philosophical egotist finds in his doctrine a ready explanation of whatever beauty and commodity nature actually has. No wonder, he says to himself, that nature is sympathetic, since I made it. And such a view, one-sided and even fatuous as it may be, undoubtedly sharpens the vision of a poet and a moralist to all that is inspiring and symbolic in the natural world. Emerson was particularly ingenious and clear-sighted in feeling the spiritual uses of fellowship with the elements. This is something in which all Teutonic poetry is rich and which forms, I think, the



most genuine and spontaneous part of modern taste, and especially of American taste. Just as some people are naturally enthralled and refreshed by music, so others are by landscape. Music and landscape make up the spiritual resources of those who cannot or dare not express their unfulfilled ideals in words. Serious poetry, profound religion (Calvinism, for instance), are the joys of an unhappiness that confesses itself; but when a genteel tradition forbids people to confess that they are unhappy, serious poetry and profound religion are closed to them by that; and since human life, in its depths, cannot then express itself openly, imagination is driven for comfort into abstract arts, where human circumstances are lost sight of, and human problems dissolve in a purer medium. The pressure of care is thus relieved, without its quietus being found in intelligence. To understand oneself is the classic form of consolation; to elude oneself is the romantic. In the presence of music or landscape human experience eludes itself, and thus romanticism is the bond between transcendental and naturalistic sentiment. The winds and clouds come to minister to the solitary ego.

Have there been, we may ask, any successful efforts to escape from the genteel tradition, and to express something worth expressing behind its back? This might well not have occurred as yet; but America is so precocious, it has been trained by the genteel tradition to be so wise for its years, that some indications of a truly native philosophy and poetry are already to be found. I might mention the humorists, of whom you here in California have had your share. The humorists, however, only half escape the genteel tradition; their humor would lose its savor if they had wholly escaped it. They point to what contradicts it in the facts; but not in order to abandon the genteel tradition, for they have nothing solid to put in its place. When they point out how ill many facts fit into it, they do not clearly conceive that this militates against the standard, but think it a funny perversity in the facts. Of course, did they earnestly respect the genteel tradition, such an incongruity would seem to them sad, rather than ludicrous. Perhaps the preva-

lence of humor in America, in and out of season, may be taken as one more evidence that the genteel tradition is present pervasively, but everywhere weak. Similarly in Italy, during the Renaissance, the Catholic tradition could not be banished from the intellect, since there was nothing articulate to take its place, yet its hold on the heart was singularly relaxed. The consequence was that humorists could regale themselves with the foibles of monks and of cardinals, with the credulity of fools, and the bogus miracles of the saints; not intending to deny the theory of the church, but caring for it so little at heart that they could find it infinitely amusing that it should be contradicted in men's lives and that no harm should come of it. So when Mark Twain says, "I was born of poor but dishonest parents," the humor depends on the parody of the genteel Anglo-Saxon convention that it is disreputable to be poor; but to hint at the hollowness of it would not be amusing if it did not remain at bottom one's habitual conviction.

The one American writer who has left the genteel tradition entirely behind is perhaps Walt Whitman. For this reason educated Americans find him rather an unpalatable person, who they sincerely protest ought not to be taken for a representative of their culture; and he certainly should not, because their culture is so genteel and traditional. But the foreigner may sometimes think otherwise, since he is looking for what may have arisen in America to express, not the polite and conventional American mind, but the spirit and the inarticulate principles that animate the community, on which its own genteel mentality seems to sit rather lightly. When the foreigner opens the pages of Walt Whitman, he thinks that he has come at last upon something representative and original. In Walt Whitman democracy is carried into psychology and morals. The various sights, moods, and emotions are given each one vote; they are declared to be all free and equal, and the innumerable commonplace moments of life are suffered to speak like the others. Those moments formerly reputed great are not excluded, but they are made to march in the ranks with their companions —

plain foot-soldiers and servants of the hour. Nor does the refusal to discriminate stop there; we must carry our principle further down, to the animals, to inanimate nature, to the cosmos as a whole. Whitman became a pantheist; but his pantheism, unlike that of the Stoics and of Spinoza, was unintellectual, lazy, and self-indulgent; for he simply felt jovially that everything real was good enough, and that he was good enough himself. In him Bohemia rebelled against the genteel tradition; but the reconstruction that alone can justify revolution did not ensue. His attitude, in principle, was utterly disintegrating; his poetic genius fell back to the lowest level, perhaps, to which it is possible for poetic genius to fall. He reduced his imagination to a passive sensorium for the registering of impressions. No element of construction remained in it, and therefore no element of penetration. But his scope was wide; and his lazy, desultory apprehension was poetical. His work, for the very reason that it is so rudimentary, contains a beginning, or rather many beginnings, that might possibly grow into a noble moral imagination, a worthy filling for the human mind. An American in the nineteenth century who completely disregarded the genteel tradition could hardly have done more.

But there is another distinguished man, lately lost to this country, who has given some rude shocks to this tradition and who, as much as Whitman, may be regarded as representing the genuine, the long silent American mind — I mean William James. He and his brother Henry were as tightly swaddled in the genteel tradition as any infant geniuses could be, for they were born before 1850, and in a Swedenborgian household. Yet they burst those bands almost entirely. The ways in which the two brothers freed themselves, however, are interestingly different. Mr. Henry James has done it by adopting the point of view of the outer world, and by turning the genteel American tradition, as he turns everything else, into a subject-matter for analysis. For him it is a curious habit of mind, intimately comprehended, to be compared with other habits of mind, also well known to him. Thus he has

overcome the genteel tradition in the classic way, by understanding it. With William James too this infusion of worldly insight and European sympathies was a potent influence, especially in his earlier days; but the chief source of his liberty was another. It was his personal spontaneity, similar to that of Emerson, and his personal vitality, similar to that of nobody else. Convictions and ideas came to him, so to speak, from the subsoil. He had a prophetic sympathy with the dawning sentiments of the age, with the moods of the dumb majority. His scattered words caught fire in many parts of the world. His way of thinking and feeling represented the true America, and represented in a measure the whole ultra-modern, radical world. Thus he eluded the genteel tradition in the romantic way, by continuing it into its opposite. The romantic mind, glorified in Hegel's dialectic (which is not dialectic at all, but a sort of tragi-comic history of experience), is always rendering its thoughts unrecognizable through the infusion of new insights, and through the insensible transformation of the moral feeling that accompanies them, till at last it has completely reversed its old judgments under cover of expanding them. Thus the genteel tradition was led a merry dance when it fell again into the hands of a genuine and vigorous romanticist like William James. He restored their revolutionary force to its neutralized elements, by picking them out afresh, and emphasizing them separately, according to his personal predilections.

For one thing, William James kept his mind and heart wide open to all that might seem, to polite minds, odd, personal, or visionary in religion and philosophy. He gave a sincerely respectful hearing to sentimentalists, mystics, spiritualists, wizards, cranks, quacks, and impostors — for it is hard to draw the line, and James was not willing to draw it prematurely. He thought, with his usual modesty, that any of these might have something to teach him. The lame, the halt, the blind, and those speaking with tongues could come to him with the certainty of finding sympathy; and if they were not healed, at least they were comforted, that a famous

professor should take them so seriously; and they began to feel that after all to have only one leg, or one hand, or one eye, or to have three, might be in itself no less beautiful than to have just two, like the stolid majority. Thus William James became the friend and helper of those groping, nervous, half-educated, spiritually disinherited, passionately hungry individuals of which America is full. He became, at the same time, their spokesman and representative before the learned world; and he made it a chief part of his vocation to recast what the learned world has to offer, so that as far as possible it might serve the needs and interests of these people.

Yet the normal practical masculine American, too, had a friend in William James. There is a feeling abroad now, to which biology and Darwinism lend some color, that theory is simply an instrument for practice, and intelligence merely a help toward material survival. Bears, it is said, have fur and claws, but poor naked man is condemned to be intelligent, or he will perish. This feeling William James embodied in that theory of thought and of truth which he called pragmatism. Intelligence, he thought, is no miraculous, idle faculty, by which we mirror passively any or everything that happens to be true, reduplicating the real world to no purpose. Intelligence has its roots and its issue in the context of events; it is one kind of practical adjustment, an experimental act, a form of vital tension. It does not essentially serve to picture other parts of reality, but to connect them. This view was not worked out by William James in its psychological and historical details; unfortunately he developed it chiefly in controversy against its opposite, which he called intellectualism, and which he hated with all the hatred of which his kind heart was capable. Intellectualism, as he conceived it, was pure pedantry; it impoverished and verbalized everything, and tied up nature in red tape. Ideas and rules that may have been occasionally useful it put in the place of the full-blooded irrational movement of life which had called them into being, and these abstractions, so soon obsolete, it strove to fix

and to worship forever. Thus all creeds and theories and all formal precepts sink in the estimation of the pragmatist to a local and temporary grammar of action, a grammar that must be changed slowly by time, and may be changed quickly by genius. To know things as a whole, or as they are eternally, if there is anything eternal in them, is not only beyond our powers, but would prove worthless, and perhaps even fatal to our lives. Ideas are not mirrors, they are weapons, their function is to prepare us to meet events, as future experience may unroll them. Those ideas that disappoint us are false ideas, those to which events are true are true themselves.

This may seem a very utilitarian view of the mind; and I confess I think it a partial one, since the logical force of beliefs and ideas, their truth or falsehood as assertions, has been overlooked altogether, or confused with the vital force of the material processes which these ideas express. It is an external view only, which marks the place and conditions of the mind in nature, but neglects its specific essence, as if a jewel were defined as a round hole in a ring. Nevertheless, the more materialistic the pragmatist's theory of the mind is, the more vitalistic his theory of nature will have to become. If the intellect is a device produced in organic bodies to expedite their processes, these organic bodies must have interests and a chosen direction in their life, otherwise their life could not be expedited, nor could anything be useful to it. In other words — and this is a third point at which the philosophy of William James has played havoc with the genteel tradition, while ostensibly defending it — nature must be conceived anthropomorphically and in psychological terms. Its purposes are not to be static harmonies, self-unfolding destinies, the logic of spirit, the spirit of logic, or any other formal method and abstract law; its purposes are to be concrete endeavors, finite efforts of souls living in an environment which they transform and by which they, too, are affected. A spirit, the divine spirit as much as the human, as this new animism conceives it, is a romantic adventurer. Its future is undetermined. Its scope, its duration, and the quality of its life

are all contingent. This spirit grows; it buds and sends forth feelers, sounding the depths around for such other centres of force or life as may exist there. It has a vital momentum, but no predetermined goal. It uses its past as a stepping-stone, or rather as a diving-board, but has an absolutely fresh will at each moment to plunge this way or that into the unknown. The universe is an experiment, it is unfinished. It has no ultimate or total nature, because it has no end. It embodies no formula or statable law; any formula is at best a poor abstraction, describing what, in some region and for some time, may be the most striking characteristic of existence; the law is a description *a posteriori* of the habit things have chosen to acquire, and which they may possibly throw off altogether. What a day may bring forth is uncertain, uncertain even to God. Omniscience is impossible; time is real; what had been omniscience hitherto might discover something more to-day. "There shall be news," William James was fond of saying with rapture, quoting from the unpublished poem of an obscure friend, "there shall be news in heaven!" There is almost certainly, he thought, a God now, there may be several gods, who might exist together, or one after the other. We might, by our conspiring sympathies, help to make a new one. Much in us is doubtless immortal; we survive death for some time in a recognizable form; but what our career and transformations may be in the sequel we cannot tell, although we may help to determine them by our daily choices. Observation must be continual if our ideas are to remain true. Eternal vigilance is the price of knowledge; perpetual hazard, perpetual experiment keep quick the edge of life.

This is, so far as I know, a new philosophical vista; it is a conception never before presented, although implied, perhaps, in various quarters, as in Norse and even Greek mythology. It is a vision radically empirical and radically romantic; and as William James himself used to say, the visions and not the arguments of a philosopher are the interesting and influential things about him. William James, rather too generously, attributed

this vision to M. Bergson, and regarded him in consequence as a philosopher of the first rank, whose thought was to be one of the turning-points in history. M. Bergson had killed intellectualism. It was his book on creative evolution, said James with humorous emphasis, that had come at last to "*écraser l'infame*." We may suspect, notwithstanding, that intellectualism, infamous and crushed, will survive the blow; and if the author of the Book of Ecclesiastes were now alive, and heard that there shall be news in heaven, he would doubtless say that there may possibly be news there, but that under the sun there is nothing new — not even radical empiricism or radical romanticism, which from the beginning of the world has been the philosophy of those who as yet had had little experience; for to the blinking little child it is not merely something in the world that is new daily, but everything is new all day.

I am not concerned with the rights and wrongs of that controversy; my point is only that William James, in this genial evolutionary view of the world, has given a rude shock to the genteel tradition. What! The world a gradual improvisation? Creation unpremeditated? God a sort of young poet or struggling artist? William James is an advocate of theism; pragmatism adds one to the evidences of religion; that is excellent. But is not the cool abstract piety of the genteel getting more than it asks for? This empirical naturalistic God is too crude and positive a force; he will work miracles, he will answer prayers, he may inhabit distinct places, and have distinct conditions under which alone he can operate; he is a neighboring being, whom we can act upon, and rely upon for specific aids, as upon a personal friend, or a physician, or an insurance company. How disconcerting! Is not this new theology a little like superstition? And yet how interesting, how exciting, if it should happen to be true! I am far from wishing to suggest that such a view seems to me more probable than conventional idealism or than Christian orthodoxy. All three are in the region of dramatic system-making and myth to which

probabilities are irrelevant. If one man says the moon is sister to the sun, and another that she is his daughter, the question is not which notion is more probable, but whether either of them is at all expressive. The so-called evidences are devised afterwards, when faith and imagination have prejudged the issue. The force of William James's new theology, or romantic cosmology, lies only in this: that it has broken the spell of the genteel tradition, and enticed faith in a new direction, which on second thoughts may prove no less alluring than the old. The important fact is not that the new fancy might possibly be true — who shall know that? — but that it has entered the heart of a leading American to conceive and to cherish it. The genteel tradition cannot be dislodged by these insurrections; there are circles to which it is still congenial, and where it will be preserved. But it has been challenged and (what is perhaps more insidious) it has been discovered. No one need be brow-beaten any longer into accepting it. No one need be afraid, for instance, that his fate is sealed because some young prig may call him dualist; the pint would call the quart a dualist, if you tried to pour the quart into him. We need not be afraid of being less profound, for being direct and sincere. The intellectual world may be traversed in many directions; the whole has not been surveyed; there is a great career in it open to talent. That is a sort of knell, that tolls the passing of the genteel tradition. Something else is now in the field; something else can appeal to the imagination, and be a thousand times more idealistic than academic idealism, which is often simply a way of whitewashing and adoring things as they are. The illegitimate monopoly which the genteel tradition had established over what ought to be assumed and what ought to be hoped for has been broken down by the first-born of the family, by the genius of the race. Henceforth there can hardly be the same peace and the same pleasure in hugging the old proprieties. Hegel will be to the next generation what Sir William Hamilton was to the last. Nothing will have been disproved, but everything will have been abandoned. An honest man has

spoken, and the cant of the genteel tradition has become harder for young lips to repeat.

With this I have finished such a sketch as I am here able to offer you of the genteel tradition in American philosophy. The subject is complex, and calls for many an excursus and qualifying footnote; yet I think the main outlines are clear enough. The chief fountains of this tradition were Calvinism and transcendentalism. Both were living fountains; but to keep them alive they required, one an agonized conscience, and the other a radical subjective criticism of knowledge. When these rare metaphysical pre-occupations disappeared — and the American atmosphere is not favorable to either of them — the two systems ceased to be inwardly understood; they subsisted as sacred mysteries only, and the combination of the two in some transcendental system of the universe (a contradiction in principle) was doubly artificial. Besides, it could hardly be held with a single mind. Natural science, history, the beliefs implied in labor and invention, could not be disregarded altogether; so that the transcendental philosopher was condemned to a double allegiance, and to not letting his left hand know the bluff that his right hand was making. Nevertheless, the difficulty in bringing practical inarticulate convictions to expression is very great, and the genteel tradition has subsisted in the academic mind for want of anything equally academic to take its place.

The academic mind, however, has had its flanks turned. On the one side came the revolt of the Bohemian temperament, with its poetry of crude naturalism; on the other side came an impassioned empiricism, welcoming popular religious witnesses to the unseen, reducing science to an instrument of success in action, and declaring the universe to be wild and young, and not to be harnessed by the logic of any school.

This revolution, I should think, might well find an echo among you, who live in a thriving society, and in the presence of a virgin and prodigious world. When you transform nature to your uses, when you experiment with her forces, and reduce them to industrial agents, you cannot feel that nature was made

by you or for you, for then these adjustments would have been pre-established. Much less can you feel it when she destroys your labor of years in a momentary spasm. You must feel, rather, that you are an offshoot of her life; one brave little force among her immense forces. When you escape, as you love to do, to your forests and your sierras, I am sure again that you do not feel you made them, or that they were made for you. They have grown, as you have grown, only more massively and more slowly. In their non-human beauty and peace they stir the sub-human depths and the superhuman possibilities of your own spirit. It is no transcendental logic that they teach; and they give no sign of any deliberate morality seated in the world. It is rather the vanity and superficiality of all logic, the needlessness of argument, the relativity of morals, the strength of time, the fertility of matter, the variety, the unspeakable variety, of possible life. Everything is measurable and conditioned, indefinitely repeated, yet, in repetition, twisted somewhat from its old form. Everywhere is beauty and nowhere permanence, everywhere an incipient harmony, nowhere an intention, nor a responsibility, nor a plan. It is the irresistible suasion of this daily spectacle, it is the daily discipline of contact with things, so different from the verbal discipline of the schools, that will, I trust, inspire the philosophy of your children. A Californian whom I had recently the pleasure of meeting observed that if the philosophers had lived among your mountains their systems would have been different from what they are. Certainly, I should say, very different from what those systems are which the European genteel tradition has handed down since Socrates; for these systems are egotistical; directly or indirectly they are anthropocentric, and inspired by the conceited notion that man, or human reason, or

the human distinction between good and evil, is the centre and pivot of the universe. That is what the mountains and the woods should make you at last ashamed to assert. From what, indeed, does the society of nature liberate you, that you find it so sweet? It is hardly (is it?) that you wish to forget your past, or your friends, or that you have any secret contempt for your present ambitions. You respect these, you respect them perhaps too much; you are not suffered by the genteel tradition to criticize or to reform them at all radically. No; it is the yoke of this genteel tradition itself that these primeval solitudes lift from your shoulders. They suspend your forced sense of your own importance not merely as individuals, but even as men. They allow you, in one happy moment, at once to play and to worship, to take yourselves simply, humbly, for what you are, and to salute the wild, indifferent, non-censorious infinity of nature. You are admonished that what you can do avails little materially, and in the end nothing. At the same time, through wonder and pleasure, you are taught speculation. You learn what you are really fitted to do, and where lie your natural dignity and joy, namely, in representing many things, without being them, and in letting your imagination, through sympathy, celebrate and echo their life. Because the peculiarity of man is that his machinery for reaction on external things has involved an imaginative transcript of these things, which is preserved and suspended in his fancy; and the interest and beauty of this inward landscape, rather than any fortunes that may await his body in the outer world, constitute his proper happiness. By their mind, its scope, quality, and temper, we estimate men, for by the mind only do we exist as men, and are more than so many storage-batteries for material energy. Let us therefore be frankly human. Let us be content to live in the mind.

## PART FOUR

### *Evolution*

---

WHEN the doctrine of evolution was first put forth, for most people its implications were far more important in the field of religion and philosophy than in science. Darwin, himself, had scrupulously avoided the wider implications of what he wrote, feeling that he was not competent to deal with them. When the theologians attacked him on the grounds of atheism he replied that he could neither believe in design nor in chance in the universe, and that the safest conclusion was that the issues were beyond the scope of man's intelligence.

That attitude, however, could not be widely accepted because the theory of evolution did seem to strike at the roots of man's whole interpretation of the world and its meaning. The crux of the matter was the doctrine of natural selection: instead of man being the product of divine foresight he was the result of a natural process which was not only blind but brutal. The conclusion seemed inescapable that God either did not exist or that he was helpless. Prior to 1859 men had sought evidence of design on the part of God in the static world; now they saw a blind nature working out its destiny in an evolving universe. There was a shift "from supernatural election to natural selection." There might have been an almost immediate acceptance of evolution if it had seemed to allow for a final cause. But without evidence of divine purpose it seemed that Christianity, and a religious view of life and the world were jeopardized by the evolutionary explanation.

When the new theory reached America the immediate reaction was to oppose it on theological grounds, but it was attacked for scientific reasons as well. In America the scientific forces of opposition were led by a scientist, Jean Louis Agassiz (1807-73).

Agassiz was a Swiss who had come to this country and taught at Harvard. He had made his reputation in the field of geology, with special reference to the study of glaciers. Both as a research scientist and as a teacher his influence was very great; it was said that in him American natural history found its leader. Why he was so strong an opponent of evolution is hard to explain. In part it was due to the influence of his teacher, Cuvier; in part because of his religious convictions. But the basis of his opposition was always on what seemed to him clearly scientific lines. He believed that each type had been created final and unchanging, and not capable of evolving from one form to another. The evidence seemed to him all against the evolutionary interpretation. That there were recur-

ring cycles within the types he was willing to admit, but they had nothing to do with the descent of man.

From a religious point of view, it was fortunate that science did not for Agassiz prove evolution. That "material form is the cover of the spirit" was to him fundamental and obvious, and as a result the study of nature became communion with the divine. To accept natural selection would have been identical with an avowal of materialism and atheism. His position emerges so clearly in his "Essay on Classification" <sup>1</sup> that it is worth quoting at some length.

All organized beings exhibit in themselves all those categories of structure and of existence upon which a natural system may be founded, in such a manner that, in tracing it, the human mind is only translating into human language the Divine thoughts expressed in nature in living realities.

All these beings do not exist in consequence of the continued agency of physical causes, but have made their successive appearance upon earth by the immediate intervention of the Creator. As proof, I may sum up my argument in the following manner:

The products of what are commonly called physical agents are everywhere the same (that is, upon the whole surface of the globe), and have always been the same (that is, during all geological periods); while organized beings are everywhere different and have differed in all ages. Between two such series of phenomena there can be no causal or genetic connection.

The combination in time and space of all these thoughtful conceptions exhibits not only thought, it shows also premeditation, power, wisdom, greatness, prescience, omniscience, providence. In one word, all these facts in their natural connection proclaim aloud the One God, whom man may know, adore, and love; and Natural History must, in good time, become the analysis of the thoughts of the Creator of the Universe, as manifested in the animal and vegetable kingdoms.

It fell to the lot of Asa Gray (1810-88), a botanist, to become Darwin's chief American advocate. He insisted that it was possible both to accept evolution and to maintain a theistic position. Once it was granted that design was not a matter solely of the past, but that it was involved continually in an ongoing process, it seemed possible to keep a faith in God, and to see evidence of his handiwork.

It was this argument repeated in various forms which made the scientific acceptance of evolution comparatively easy within a short time. But the philosophical issues which emerged are with us still. The symposium reprinted in this volume from the *North American Review* raises many of the more important questions. Simon Newcomb, an astronomer, set the stage for the discussion by declaring that the scientist studies nature solely for the purpose of describing the phenomena, and that only the theologian would seek in nature the proof for a directing mind. Noah Porter, professor of Moral Philosophy at Yale, replied that "a universe of law is, *ipso facto*, a universe of design." James Freeman Clark, a Unitarian clergyman and a Transcendentalist, challenged Newcomb's assumption, "since by accepting it, I should surrender the very cause I wish to defend, namely, that we can perceive design in Nature." The last member of the symposium,

<sup>1</sup> "Essay on Classification," in *Contributions to the Natural History of the United States of America*, by Louis Agassiz (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1857), part One, chap. I, p. 135.



James McCosh was for many years the president of Princeton. He tells us that he had not been in Princeton a week until he let it be known that he was in favor of evolution, properly interpreted. What that proper interpretation was comes out in his discussion.

The American whose name was most closely associated with the reinterpretation of religion in evolutionary terms was John Fiske. For him, evolution was not a godless process. Rather "the story shows us Man becoming more and more clearly the image of God." "Below the surface din and clashing of the struggle for life we hear the undertone of the deep ethical purpose." It should be made clear that Fiske popularized Spencer's, not Darwin's type of evolution. For him, natural selection had given way to what is essentially the older divine election. What seems evil was interpreted as having an indispensable function. The cosmic process was now proved to have been aiming at something better than "egoism and dinosaurs." Man has been replaced in his old position as the central figure of the universe. On this basis evolution could be accepted, but the issues which had originally been raised were not permanently settled; they were to re-emerge in only slightly different forms in the discussions over naturalism and supernaturalism.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### *I. Primary Sources:*

AGASSIZ, LOUIS, AN ESSAY ON CLASSIFICATION. London: 1859. Originally printed as Part I of CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES OF NORTH AMERICA. 4 vols. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1857.

AGASSIZ, LOUIS, "EVOLUTION AND PERMANENCE OF TYPE," ATLANTIC MONTHLY, 33:92-101 (1874).

FISKE, JOHN, OUTLINE OF COSMIC PHILOSOPHY BASED ON THE DOCTRINE OF EVOLUTION: WITH CRITICISMS ON THE POSITIVE PHILOSOPHY. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1891.

FISKE, JOHN, THROUGH NATURE TO GOD. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1899.

### *II. Secondary Sources*

ADAMS, HENRY, THE EDUCATION OF HENRY ADAMS. Privately printed in 1906. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1918.

ADAMS, HENRY, MONT ST MICHEL AND CHARTRES. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1904.

AGASSIZ, ELIZABETH CARY, editor, LOUIS AGASSIZ: HIS LIFE AND CORRESPONDENCE. 2 vols. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1885.

CLARK, JOHN SPENCER, THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF JOHN FISKE. 2 vols. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1917.

JAMES, WILLIAM, "LOUIS AGASSIZ," MEMORIES AND STUDIES. New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1912.

JOHNSON, ALLEN, editor, DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN BIOGRAPHY. Agassiz, Asa Gray, Fiske.

KRUTCH, JOSEPH WOOD, THE MODERN TEMPER: A STUDY AND A CONFESSION. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1929.

PARRINGTON, V. L. MAIN CURRENTS IN AMERICAN THOUGHT. Vol. II, THE ROMANTIC REVOLUTION IN AMERICA.

RILEY, I. W., AMERICAN THOUGHT.



# *A Symposium*

## LAW AND DESIGN IN NATURE<sup>1</sup>

*Prof. Simon Newcomb.*

*Rev. James Freeman Clarke, D.D.*

*Rev. Noah Porter, D.D., LL.D.*

*Rev. James McCosh, D.D., LL.D.*

---

*Simon Newcomb*

(1835-1910)

SIMON NEWCOMB, America's most distinguished astronomer, was born at Wallace, Nova Scotia. After a bitter struggle for an education he was finally commissioned professor of mathematics in the U.S. Navy in 1861, and continued to work at the Naval Observatory until his retirement in 1897. He did not often participate in philosophical discussions, being concerned primarily with his chosen field of astronomy.

THE object aimed at in the present discussion is to take a first step toward securing a better understanding of each other's position between two conflicting schools of thought respecting the course of Nature. One of these schools we may call that of the scientific philosophy, because it is for the most part represented by investigators or students of science. The other is that of the religious philosophy, but in designating it thus we do not mean to imply that it is necessarily unscientific, any more than that the scientific school is necessarily irreligious. Perhaps it would be better to call it the theological school of thought, because it seeks in Nature to find proof of a directing Mind, while the other school studies Nature solely to learn her phenomena, and to draw such philo-

sophic conclusions as may be founded on their study.

Whether there is a necessary conflict between the views of the two schools, we shall not pretend to say: we are concerned only with the fact that a conflict does exist, and that it turns on certain questions respecting what we may call the fundamental methods of Nature. It is assumed on both sides that there is some sort of uniform plan and method in the course of Nature, but there is not only no agreement, but no mutual understanding as to what that plan and method are. To the scientific school the other presents itself as criticizing its fundamental position, and yet in no case directly denying it. So far as can be understood, the theological school refuses to express any opinion on the funda-

<sup>1</sup> *The North American Review*, 1879, vol. 128.

mental proposition on which the whole discussion turns, but appears equally ready to admit or deny it according to the bearing of the argument to be founded on such admission or denial. It is not pretended that this is a fair statement of the position they mean to occupy, but only that it is the manner in which their position presents itself to the other school. We need not discuss the question which side the fault is on, since any party which does not understand the other has a right to state his difficulties, and to ask the other for explanation. The first step toward clearing the ground for a mutual understanding is, to state and explain the position taken by the scientific school, and to inquire of the other whether this position is entirely untenable. The fundamental postulate of the scientific philosophy is a principle founded on a limited series of observations, and extended by induction to the whole course of Nature. It may be expressed in the following words:

The whole course of nature, considered as a succession of phenomena, is conditioned solely by antecedent causes, in the action of which no regard to consequences is either traceable by human investigation, or necessary to foresee the phenomena.

The sole question presented for discussion in the present series of papers is the following: To what extent is the above postulate consistent with sound doctrine?

The somewhat vague term "sound doctrine" is used purposely in place of a more specific one, in order to give the representatives of the opposing school the widest range of position from which to express acquiescence or dissent. We might have inquired whether the doctrine is consistent with the action of a Supreme Will in the processes of Nature; whether it can be reconciled with the doctrine of final causes, or with any other doctrine respecting the relation of the Creator to his works which one might think proper to propound. But, by doing so, we should narrow the field of inquiry in such a way as to make the result indecisive, and therefore unsatisfactory.

It must also be noted that we do not inquire whether the hypothesis is itself sound in

doctrine, but only whether it is consistent with soundness. It would be vain to expect in a single discussion to reach any result respecting its absolute truth or falsity, or even to argue its truth in its widest extent. The question of its truth enters in this indirect way: that, if it is inconsistent with any admitted or observed fact, it will be allowable to demonstrate the inconsistency. So also if it may be accepted within certain definable limits, but is not admissible beyond those limits, that fact ought to be clearly understood. And we may remark, at the outset, that if one admits that the postulate may, for aught we know, be true for the whole field of phenomena, he admits all that the scientific school claims in this connection. The postulate is, in fact, presented as a scientific and not as a theological principle, and the question whether it is valid as such must be settled before any conclusion in a field higher than that of phenomena can be founded upon it.

In order to confine the discussion as closely as possible to the exact points of real or possible differences, we shall briefly explain the postulate in such a manner that there shall be as little room as possible for misunderstanding it. In doing so we shall make no attempt to argue its truth or falsity, but only seek to make known its meaning and scope. The difficulties which have heretofore arisen have their origin partly in a misconception as to what the scientific philosopher means when he speaks of reducing phenomena to general laws, or explaining them by the operation of natural causes, and partly from a failure to distinguish clearly between phenomena as such and the abstract ideas with which they may be associated. It is worthy of remark that the difficulty of understanding the postulate arises not from its complexity or the abstract character of the ideas involved in it, but from its extremely simple and concrete character. It involves no ideas but such as are familiar from childhood and really understood by children, though they may not be able to express them in language. We are indeed in a difficulty similar to that which might be encountered by a rustic when called upon to define what he meant by a loaf

of bread before a professor of logic, and to word his definition in such a way as to stand good against all the professor's analysis. If our own attempt fails to stand analysis, we shall repose on the same hope that would sustain the rustic — namely, that, after all, his interlocutor understood what a loaf of bread was just as well as he did himself.

The first point to be explained is, what is meant by considering the course of Nature simply as a succession of phenomena. The reason for this restriction is, that we must agree about phenomena before we can have any intelligent discussion respecting what lies behind or above them. The meaning of the restriction is, that we eliminate from our discussion all those abstract conceptions which are frequently associated with phenomena, but which do not serve to assist in defining phenomena. Among these conceptions are the opposing ones of potentiality and necessity, which several schools of philosophers persist in trying to impose on phenomena. These conceptions have no place whatever in scientific investigation, and are therefore not to be in any way brought into the present discussion. For instance, the scientific philosophy does not assert that gravitation "must" act, that a stone "necessarily" falls, or that the course of Nature "cannot" do otherwise than conform to mathematical laws; it only asserts that as a simple matter of fact gravitation does act, and events in Nature do occur in conformity with definable laws. If we admit this, the question is settled without discussing the question of necessity. Nor is it any argument against the postulate to maintain or show that things may, might, could, or would be different from what they are, because the postulate considers things only as they are and not as they may be. The only modifications of a proposition which it admits are: The fact is so, the fact is not so; I do not know whether the fact is or is not so. The latter, it will be remembered, does not express anything respecting the fact, but only a state of ignorance confined to our own minds.

Another class of conceptions associated with phenomena, but entirely excluded in

the present discussion, are those of the invisible forces or causes which may lie behind the visible course of Nature. Respecting this everyone is at liberty to hold any opinions without coming into conflict with the scientific philosophy, provided only that he draws no conclusion inconsistent with what the other believes to be legitimate induction from observation. For instance, it is not objectionable to the postulate to say that all things are determined by a Divine Will, because the postulate assumes nothing respecting such will, and has nothing whatever to do with its supposed immanence in the whole course of Nature, unless conclusions inconsistent with observed facts are founded upon it. So long as the religious school admits that stones fall, water runs, and storms move, according to the scientific postulate, they may place any occult causes behind those phenomena which do not lead to results incompatible with it. For the same reason there is no objection to maintaining that things were designed to be as they are, unless such design is considered to be a physical cause which can be traced by studying such things.

We now reach the main proposition, that the course of Nature is conditioned solely by antecedent causes, in the action of which no regard to consequences can be traced. We use the word "conditioned" instead of "determined," to do away with all conception of necessity, and to avoid being understood as saying that things must be instead of simply saying that things are. We also use the very ambiguous word "cause," susceptible of being pulled to pieces, and shown to mean everything, anything, or nothing, at pleasure, in its ordinary everyday sense, which everybody understands, and which therefore need not be further defined. If it be replied that this everyday sense is vague, and susceptible of minute subdivisions into different meanings, we reply that any meaning consistent with ordinary ideas may be assigned to it.

The further distinction of what is meant can be better understood by example than in any other way. Let us take the case of destruction of a theatre by fire, and inquire

why it occurred. We can give three answers:

1. That the fire was the work of a Higher Being, who desired to attain some end. Perhaps there were bad people in the theatre, who were to be punished or prevented from further crime; or perhaps the theatre was injuring the morals of the community, and was therefore burned for the public good.

2. That the cause was entirely inscrutable, and therefore such as to elude all human investigation.

3. That it occurred in one of the many ways by which everyone knows that fires may occur, and that the character of the theatre or the intentions of the wicked people had nothing at all to do with the matter.

Of these three possible modes of occurrence of the fire, only the third is admitted by the postulate of the scientific school as affording an explanation. By an explanation we mean the statement of a general principle covering all cases of the origin of fires, and of some special facts showing the fire to be the combined result of the fact and the principle. For instance, whenever a match is rubbed in a certain way and in a certain position relative to a piece of drapery, a fire will be the result. In this case the required conditions were fulfilled by an actress treading upon a match. The fire will always result when these same conditions are fulfilled, no matter what the character of the play or of the audience. But, according to the scientific postulate, we could make no such general assertion respecting the first explanation, which is therefore inadmissible as an explanation.

As another example we may take the motions of the planets. By assuming that these motions take place in accordance with the law of universal gravitation, the astronomer is enabled to predict, years or centuries in advance, that the moon's shadow will pass over certain regions of the earth at certain stated times. Why can he not predict every natural occurrence — the earthquakes, the storms, the floods, the plagues of the future — with equal certainty? The answer of the postulate is, that it is only on account of his want of knowledge and want of reasoning power. A mind capable of expressing in

language the necessary data, fully acquainted with certain laws, and possessed of a calculus of sufficient power, could foresee the end of all things from the beginning by a process the same in kind as that by which the mathematician foresees the celestial motions. The celestial motions, phenomenally conditioned by the law of gravitation and by the initial circumstances of the motions, are supposed to symbolize the whole course of inanimate Nature, so far at least as the phenomena are concerned.

We have presented an antithesis between the theory presented for discussion and the theory of final causes which assumes that things have been arranged with a visible purpose. But the ground is frequently taken that there is really no antagonism between these two theories, and that the doctrine of a course of Nature proceeding in accordance with invariable laws is entirely consistent with the doctrine of final causes. But, notwithstanding this occasional assertion of consistency, every advance of the scientific philosophy toward presenting a complete theory of the course of Nature in accordance with their doctrine is vigorously contested. Now, if theologians find the doctrine alluded to not inconsistent with their views, they have no right to contest it in the manner that they do; and the scientific philosopher has a right to presume that their seeming inconsistency is founded on some failure between the two schools to give the same meaning to the term, laws of Nature. An understanding on this point can be best reached, not by an abstract definition, but by concrete examples of the meaning of the scientific postulate, like those just given. Just so far as the theologian can reconcile the motions of the planets or the burning of the theatre with final causes or with a directing hand, so far is he at liberty to reconcile the whole course of Nature in the same way.

We have stated the scientific postulate in the widest and most general terms. Had we been disposed to narrow the inquiry, we might have substituted for it a statement of the doctrine of evolution, because it is here that the dispute is at present raging with most bitterness. But, since the doctrine of

evolution is itself founded on the postulate, our discussion is more complete if we include the more general proposition. The theory of evolution maintains that certain forms formerly supposed to be the result of special creation are really the product of natural causes of precisely the same character with

those which cause the movement of storms and the chemical changes going on in the world around us. Hence a consideration of the theological tendencies of the one will include the same thing for the other.

SIMON NEWCOMB

### Noah Porter

(1811-1892)

NOAH PORTER was a Congregational clergyman who is best known, however, for his work at Yale. In 1846 he was invited to become Clark Professor of Moral Philosophy there, and from 1871 to 1886 he served as President. His career both as Professor and as President was marked by decided conservatism. His opposition to the teaching of William Graham Sumner nearly caused the latter to leave Yale. Porter's chief work was *The Human Intellect*, published in 1868, and for many years regarded as the leading textbook in psychology.

PROFESSOR NEWCOMB, it will be observed, opens the discussion by giving his views of the antagonistic positions taken by the scientific and theological schools respectively in regard to the course of Nature. So far as the last school is concerned, I am compelled to say that he evinces more candor and desire to be just than success in stating what he conceives this school to hold. What he criticizes it for holding, and implies that it does hold, is something like this: The theological school conceives final causes to be co-ordinate with efficient or physical causes, holding that they are manifested by similar indications and are tested by similar experiments. In the example cited of the burning of a theatre, the scientific school recognizes only physical agencies or causes; the theological discerns a final cause, or the purpose of "a Higher Being who desired to attain some end," i.e., a moral effect, and directly produces it, as the torch causes the physical conflagration.

I cannot accept this as a correct statement of what is taught or implied by any school of thinkers which holds that design or final cause is manifest in the course of Nature, or

must be assumed to explain it. The arguments which Professor Newcomb arrays against this view seem to me as uncalled for as the fiction toward which he directs them is imaginary.

Leaving this point to return to it again, I pass to his view of "the fundamental postulate of the scientific philosophy," as it is stated by himself. "The whole course of Nature, considered as a succession of phenomena, is conditioned solely by antecedent causes, in the action of which no regard to consequences is either traceable by human investigation or necessary to foresee the phenomena." This statement, it will be seen, is divided into two portions, an affirmation and a denial. The affirmation seems to me defective for its omissions, the denial to be false, and the postulate itself to be therefore inconsistent with sound doctrine. By sound doctrine I mean truth of any kind, whether it pertains to the science of Nature, the science of man, or the science of God. I do not argue from the inferences or consequences to theology that might follow from the postulate that it is therefore untrue, but that it is unsound in what it omits, and

denies, and for this reason is inconsistent with "sound doctrine." I have no favors to ask and no appeals to make as a theologian, but write only in the interests of science and the truth.

The defects of the affirmative part of the postulate are made more obvious by the author's subsequent explanations of his meaning. He tells us that, in asserting that science concerns itself with the succession of phenomena, he desires to get rid of those abstract conceptions which are often associated with phenomena — particularly "potentiality and necessity." We are tempted to inquire whether these conceptions are any more abstract than the conception of "succession"? We also inquire whether the assertion in the postulate, that this succession of phenomena is "*conditioned solely by antecedent causes*," does not imply the presence and validity of these very conceptions of potentiality and necessity? If the author denies causation with potentiality and necessity, he must limit science to inquiries respecting "succession," and assign to it a narrower sphere than the positivists who recognize the relation of similarity and succession.

He proceeds to assert that the only question with which science concerns itself is what can be established as *a fact*. We wait to be informed what he means by a fact or phenomenon. Does he mean that science concerns itself with facts or phenomena as such, or with facts and phenomena as *related*? If the latter, is not the question open whether the relations of *design* may not as properly be called facts as the relations of *time* or *causation*?

He adds, all "invisible forces or causes" which "lie behind the visible course of Nature" must be excluded, and again, all "occult causes." But why are relations of design, or the facts or phenomena which they explain, any more invisible or occult than the relations of succession or causation? Perhaps by "invisible" and "occult" he means spiritual as contrasted with physical, and thus would limit Nature to material forces and phenomena, excluding spirit from holding any place in Nature or any relations

to Nature, or any agency in its phenomena, which science is bound to recognize.

Whatever view we take of the affirmation of this postulate, it unwarrantably narrows the conception of the course of Nature as the subject-matter of science. We would widen that conception as follows:

1. The course of Nature includes the phenomena and facts of spirit as truly as those of matter. Scientifically considered, the one are no more "invisible," "occult," or "abstract" than the other. Of the two, the agency of spirit is more visible, manifest, and concrete than any agency of matter in the production of that effect which we call science.

2. These facts or phenomena, these forces or agents, are connected by various relations, as of time and space, involving number and geometry; also of likeness or analogy, cause and effect, and perhaps others. These are the materials from and by which science is constructed by the rational spirit, as it determines the properties, forces, and pre-eminently *the laws* of both matter and spirit. That Professor Newcomb should fail to emphasize the pre-eminence of laws as the subject-matter of science may well occasion surprise.

3. Laws are affirmed of the action of forces as "conditioned" or modified mathematically in the production of effects by relations of time or space, also as conditioned by one another when two or more forces act together in the production of any constant or regular effect. In the discovery of forces, properties, or laws, science is not, however, shut up to the use of mathematical tests or verifying experiments. Some sciences of matter, even, e.g., physiology, do not admit these criteria. Even those which do, recognize very largely the facts and analogies, the interpretations and probabilities, which precede and follow such tests. Every one of them makes the most liberal use of facts and relations, which must be assumed as the preconditions of the experimental element in induction.

4. A universe of law is, *ipso facto*, a universe of design. A "course of Nature" the phenomena of which occur in regular succession, much more a course of Nature conditioned by causes, is neither thinkable nor explicable



except by antecedent and controlling purpose. Professor Newcomb says it is assumed that there "is some sort of *uniform plan and method* in the course of Nature. But plan and method imply design, or at the least are best explained by design. Design is objective thought — "a plan or method," "the *fundamental* method of Nature," as Professor Newcomb elsewhere says. Objective thought is completed and explained by a subjective thinker whose plans and methods science interprets.

5. Induction itself requires design, or "a plan or method in the course of Nature" as its postulate. Professor Newcomb says that the fundamental postulate of the scientific philosophy is "founded on a limited series of observations, and extending by induction to the whole course of Nature." But he forgets that he has already provided a postulate still more *fundamental* — if this is not an Hibernicism — in asserting "a plan and method" in Nature. Moreover, what he calls "extending by induction" can be explained and justified only by a belief in interpretable analogies, which are explicable only by design, or "fundamental methods of Nature."

6. The course of Nature furnishes constant examples of the interaction of matter and spirit. Subjective thought makes itself manifest as objective thought through material phenomena. Through the same media, objective thought and subjective thought are interpreted by the rapid processes of natural induction. Moreover, thought or spirit controls matter and produces and prevents, modifies and arrests, the operation of physical agencies without hindering their activity or interfering with their laws. It is true the mutual relations of spiritual and material force are very imperfectly understood, and the laws of their coaction are inexactly determined, but the fact that they act in harmony with one another — while both are potent factors to varying effects — cannot be questioned. All this is affirmed in the postulate of a *plan or method* in Nature, and confirmed by our experiments and observations.

7. In the economy of Nature, spirit is of

greater significance than matter, and the phenomena and effects of the physical universe proceed in subservience to ends which concern rational and sentient beings. This is assumed by Science itself, and by Art, the servitor of Science. What were the unknown and the unused powers of Nature, were they reflected by no interpreting mind and transfigured by no imitative or constructive skill? What were these intellectual achievements of science and art, if they did not minister to the enjoyments of sentient souls? What were sentient enjoyment, were it not used as a motive for gratitude and love and worship in those who, in knowledge, enjoyment, and duty are like God, the Being who is the fundamental postulate of all science, and the moral Ruler of the spirits who interpret his thoughts, his feelings, and his will?

Thus far we have sought to supply what is omitted in what Professor Newcomb affirms of the course of Nature. Our enlarged definition will enable us briefly to dispose of *his denial*, viz., "in the action of which no regard to consequences is either traceable by human investigation or necessary to foresee the phenomena." By "a regard to consequences," he must mean consequences as designed, not merely physical sequences, but psychological or spiritual effects, more exactly sentient or moral good or evil. When he says that these "cannot be traceable by human investigation," he may mean that they cannot be tested by a certain class of scientific criteria or processes, i.e., by mathematical formulae or physical experiments. Taken in this sense his words are true; but if he means that their presence and agency cannot be discerned and proved by evidence as satisfactory as that which is technically called scientific, and indeed by evidence precisely similar to that which is accepted for many facts and truths in physical science, we dissent from him altogether. No man who rightly estimates the variety in the kinds of evidence which enforces our belief in the various facts and truths of physical science would deny that design or purpose is as clearly traceable in many of the arrangements and phenomena of Nature as the causes or laws that are ascertained by experiment or induction.

In the example of the destruction of a theatre by fire, Professor Newcomb gives three possible answers to the question "why it occurred." Overlooking that "why" in such a connection may mean "whence," "how," or "for what," as it asks for answers in the terms of *a cause, a law, or an end*, he insists that only one of two answers can be given, viz., either "the fire was the work of an action of a Higher Being," or was the effect of any of the ordinary physical agencies, and reasons as though the one necessarily excluded the other. In other words, he overlooks the solution that the effect might be caused by physical agencies, and still be designed by God.

He subsequently refers to this last position as possible, but he obviously regards it as a theory for which theologians are responsible and are bound to look after, but which has no scientific value. Had he but reflected that *events* in Nature and spirit, whether designed or undesigned, are to be distinguished from the *forces* and even from the *laws of Nature*, and that similar forces, acting under fixed laws, are capable of an indefinite variety of effects, and that an indefinite variety of physical effects may be adjusted to an equally indefinite variety of psychical needs by a designing mind, he would have seen that science provides the amplest room for the accomplishment of the utmost conceivable variety of the designs of a Higher Being, and all by means of the forces and laws of Nature.

The example from the motions of the planets he presses to another application. In astronomy, he says, we not only can explain the present but can predict the future, and, had we the same insight into the agents and laws of other phenomena, we could in like manner predict the minutest event in any department of the physical universe. From this he would have us conclude that the possibility of inferring "a visible purpose" is excluded if design is admitted. To this we reply that the constancy of the operations of

Nature and the consequent possibility of foreseeing the minutest consequences are no more inconsistent with the belief in design in the future than an insight into these forces and operations of Nature is inconsistent with such belief at any present moment. But why, then, do theologians so vigorously contest "every advance of the scientific philosophy toward a complete theory of the course of Nature in accordance with their doctrines"? We reply that, had Professor Newcomb, in this and other discussions of this topic, insisted that the course of Nature as truly manifests design as it does the causes or the successions of phenomena, one theologian at least would not have vigorously contested his opinions of design, however unsatisfactory he might have found some of his conceptions of the sphere and postulates of science.

We ought not to be surprised that Professor Newcomb, being an astronomer, should so confidently assert that the celestial motions are supposed "to symbolize the whole course of inanimate Nature." But Nature is also animate and ensouled, and the forces and laws which control the activities of life and spirit may not be symbolized by the celestial motions. The eminent Du Bois-Reymond, in his well-known address on the limits of our knowledge of Nature, after discoursing of what he calls the astronomical knowledge and foreknowledge of Nature's forces and laws and events, draws a sharp line between the field of this *astronomical knowledge* and the agencies and relations in the course of Nature which can never be thus mastered. In respect to some of these questions he is content to say, *ignoramus* — in respect to others, *ignorabimus*. If this is true of the forces and relations of Nature, how much more must it be true of the relations which the self-existent Creator holds to the phenomena and laws of both matter and spirit as they manifest his thoughts and accomplish his designs!

NOAH PORTER

*James Freeman Clarke*

(1810-1888)

It would probably be accurate to classify James Freeman Clarke as a Transcendentalist. Most of his assumptions belonged to that tradition even though his effective work was done long after that movement had waned. A graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Divinity School, he founded in Boston in 1841 The Church of the Disciples. Throughout his life he was active in many public movements, working for temperance, for suffrage for women, and in the anti-slavery movement.

IN THE paper which opens this discussion on "Law and Design in Nature," Professor Newcomb announces in a single sentence a proposition, the truth or falsehood of which, he tells us, is "the sole question presented for discussion in the present series of papers."

But, as soon as we examine this proposition, we find that it contains not one sole question, but three. The three are independent of each other, and do not necessarily stand or fall together. They are these:

1. "The whole course of Nature, considered as a succession of phenomena, is conditioned solely by antecedent causes."

2. In the action of these causes, "no regard to consequences is traceable."

3. And no regard to consequences is "necessary to foresee the phenomena."

Of these three propositions I admit the truth of the first; deny the truth of the second; and, for want of space, and because of its relative unimportance, leave the third unexamined.

The first proposition is so evidently true, and so universally admitted, that it was hardly worth positing for discussion. It is merely affirming that every natural phenomenon implies a cause. The word "antecedent" is ambiguous, but, if it intends logical and not chronological antecedence, it is unobjectionable. So understood, we are merely asked if we can accept the law of universal causation; which I suppose we shall all readily do, since this law is the basis of theology no less than of science. Without it, we could not prove the existence of the first

cause. Professor Newcomb has divided us into two conflicting schools, one of theology and the other of science. Taking my place in the school of theology, I think I may safely assert for my brethren that on this point there is no conflict, but that we all admit the truth of the law of universal causation. It will be noticed that Professor Newcomb has carefully worded his statement, so as not to confine us to physical causes, nor even to exclude supernatural causes from without, working into the nexus of natural laws. He does not say "antecedent physical causes," nor does he say "causes which have existed from the beginning."

Admitting thus the truth of the first proposition, I must resolutely deny that of the second; since, by accepting it, I should surrender the very cause I wish to defend, namely, that we can perceive design in Nature. Final causes are those which "regard consequences." The principle of finality is defined by M. Janet (in his recent exhaustive work, *Les Causes Finales*) as "the present determined by the future." One example of the way in which we can trace in Nature "a regard to consequences" is so excellently stated by this eminent philosopher that we will introduce it here:

"Consider what is implied in the egg of a bird. In the mystery and night of incubation there comes, by the combination of an incredible number of causes, a living machine within the egg. It is absolutely separated from the external world, but every part is related to some future use. The outward

physical world which the creature is to inhabit is wholly divided by impenetrable veils from this internal laboratory, but a pre-established harmony exists between them. Without, there is light, within, an optical machine adapted to it. Without, there is sound; within, an acoustic apparatus. Without, are vegetables and animals; within, organs for their reception and assimilation. Without, is air; within, lungs with which to breathe it. Without, is oxygen; within, blood to be oxygenized. Without, is earth; within, feet are being made to walk on it. Without, is the atmosphere; within, are wings with which to fly through it. Now imagine a blind and idiotic workman, alone in a cellar, who simply by moving his limbs to and fro should be found to have forged a key capable of opening the most complex lock. If we exclude design, this is what Nature is supposed to be doing."

That design exists in Nature, and that earthly phenomena actually depend on final causes as well as on efficient causes, appears from the industry of man. Man is certainly a part of Nature, and those who accept evolution must regard him as the highest development resulting from natural processes. Now, all over the earth, from morning till evening, men are acting for ends. "Regard to consequences is traceable" in all their conduct. They are moved by hope and expectation. They devise plans, and act for a purpose. From the savage hammering his flint arrow-heads, up to a Shakespeare composing *Hamlet*, a Columbus seeking a new way to Asia, or a Paul converting Europe to a Syrian religion, human industry is a constant proof that a large part of the course of Nature on this earth is the result of design. And, as man develops into higher stages, this principle of design rises also from the simple to the complex, taking ever larger forms. A ship, for instance, shows throughout the adaptation of means to ends, by which complex adaptations produce a unity of result.

And that there is no conflict between the action of physical causes and final causes is demonstrated by the works of man, since they all result from the harmonious action of both. In studying human works we ask two

questions — "How?" and "Why?" We ask, "What is it for?" and "How is it done?" The two lines of inquiry run parallel, and without conflict. So, in studying the works of Nature, to seek for design does not obstruct the investigation of causes, and may often aid it. Thus Harvey is said to have been led to the discovery of the circulation of the blood by seeking for the use of the valves of the veins and heart.

The human mind is so constituted that, whenever it sees an event, it is obliged to infer a cause. So, whenever it sees adaptation, it infers design. It is not necessary to know the end proposed, or who were the agents. Adaptation itself, implying the use of means, leads us irresistibly to infer intention. We do not know who built Stonehenge, or some of the pyramids, or what they were built for; but no one doubts that they were the result of design. This inference is strengthened if we see combination toward an end, and preparation made beforehand for a result which comes afterward. From preparation, combination, and adaptation, we are led to believe in the presence of human design even where we did not before know of the presence of human beings. A few rudely shaped stones, found in a stratum belonging to the Quaternary period, in which man had before not been believed to exist, changed that opinion. Those chipped flints showed adaptation; from adaptation design was inferred; and design implied the presence of man.

Now, we find in Nature, especially in the organization and instincts of animals, myriads of similar instances of preparation, combination, and adaptation. Two explanations only of this occurred to antiquity — design and chance. Socrates, Plato, and others were led by such facts to infer the creation of the world by an intelligent author — "*ille opifex rerum*." Democritus, Epicurus, and Lucretius ascribed it to the fortuitous concourse of atoms. But modern science has expelled chance from the universe, and substituted law. Laplace, observing forty-three instances in the solar system of planets and their satellites revolving on their axes or moving in their orbits, from west to east,

declared that this could not be a mere coincidence. Chance, therefore, being set aside, the question takes another form: "Did the cosmos that we see come by design or by law?"

But does this really change the question? Granting, for example, the truth of the theory of the development of all forms of life, under the operation of law, from a primal cell, we must then ask, "Did these *laws* come by chance or by design?" It is not possible to evade that issue. If the universe resulted from non-intelligent forces, those forces themselves must have existed as the result of chance or of intelligence. If you put out the eyes, you leave blindness; if you strike intelligence out of the creative mystery, you leave blind forces, the result of accident. Whatever is not from intelligence is from accident. To substitute law for chance is merely removing the difficulty a little further back, it does not solve it.

To eliminate interventions from the universe is not to remove design. The most profound theists have denied such interruptions of the course of Nature. Leibnitz is an illustrious example of this. Janet declares him to have been the true author of the theory of evolution, by his "Law of Continuity," of "Insensible Perceptions," and of "Infinitely Small Increments." Yet he also fully believed in final causes. Descartes, who objected to some teleological statements, believed that the Creator imposed laws on chaos by which the world emerged into a cosmos. We know that existing animals are evolved by a continuous process from eggs, and existing vegetables by a like process from seeds. No one ever supposed that there was less of design on this account in their creation. So, if all existing things came at first by a like process from a single germ, it would not argue less, but far more of design, in the universe.

The theory of "natural selection" does not enable us to dispense with final causes. This theory requires the existence of forces working according to the law of heredity and the law of variation, together with a suitable environment. But whence came this arrangement, by which a law of heredity was combined with a law of variation, and both

made to act in a suitable environment? Here we find again the three marks of a designing intelligence. preparation, combination, adaptation. That intelligence which combines and adapts means to ends is merely remanded to the initial step of the process, instead of being allowed to act continuously along the whole line of evolution. Even though you can explain by the action of mechanical forces the whole development of the solar system and its contents from a nebula, you have only accumulated all the action of a creative intelligence in the nebula itself. Because I can explain the mechanical process by which a watch keeps time, I have not excluded the necessity of a watchmaker. Because, walking through my neighbor's grounds, I come upon a water-ram pumping up water by a purely mechanical process, I do not argue that this mechanism makes the assumption of an inventor superfluous. In human industry we perceive a power capable of using the blind forces of Nature for an intelligent end; which prepares beforehand for the intended result; which combines various conditions suited to produce it, and so creates order, system, use. But we observe in Nature exactly similar examples of order, method, and system, resulting from a vast number of combinations, correlations, and adaptations of natural forces. Man himself is such a result. He is an animal capable of activity, happiness, progress. But innumerable causes are combined and harmonized in his physical frame, each necessary to this end. As the human intelligence is the only power we know capable of accomplishing such results, analogy leads us to assume that a similar intelligence presides over the like combinations of means to ends in Nature. If anyone questions the value of this argument from analogy, let him remember how entirely we rely upon it in all the business of life. We only *know* the motives which govern our own actions, but we infer by analogy that others act from similar motives. Knowing that we ourselves combine means designed to effect ends — when we see others adapting means to ends, we assume that they act also with design. Hence we have a right to extend the argument further and higher.

The result of what I have said is this: The phenomena of the universe cannot be satisfactorily explained unless by the study both of efficient causes and of final causes. Routine scientists, confining themselves to the one, and routine theologians, confining themselves to the other, may suppose them to be in conflict. But men of larger insight, like Leibnitz, Newton, Descartes, and Bacon, easily see the harmony between them. Like Hegel they say: "Nature is no less artful than powerful; it attains its end while it allows all things to act according to their

constitution"; or they declare with Bacon that "the highest link of Nature's chain is fastened to the foot of Jupiter's chair." But the belief in final causes does not imply belief in supernatural intervention, nor of any disturbance in the continuity of natural processes. It means that Nature is pervaded by an intelligent presence, that mind is above and around matter; that mechanical laws are themselves a manifestation of some providing wisdom, and that when we say Nature we also say God.

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE

### *James McCosh*

(1811-1894)

ALTHOUGH he was fifty-seven years of age before he came to America, James McCosh is rightly thought of as an American because of the extent of his influence here. He was born in Scotland and was graduated from the University of Edinburgh. In 1834 he became a licensed preacher of the Established Church of Scotland. He was originally a disciple of Hamilton, but later came much closer to Reid and the Scotch Realists, becoming a firm believer in intuition as a basis for truth. In 1868 he became president of Princeton University, where he was a staunch defender of evolution, insisting that it magnified the wonder of creation.

WHATELY describes the "Fallacy of Interrogation" as consisting "in asking several questions which appear to be but one; so that whatever one answer is given, being, of course, applicable to one only of the implied, may be interpreted as applied to the other." Professor Newcomb has unconsciously fallen into this fallacy. He evidently looks on the questions he puts as one, and speaks of his "postulate," his "position," his "fundamental proposition." But he has mixed up no fewer than three questions, which are not the same, with each other, which have no necessary connection, and are not to be satisfied with one reply. In such cases, logicians enjoin that, in order to detect the ambiguity, each question be answered separately. Thus, if someone were to ask me, "Did you write such an article, without a meaning,

and was this wise?" I might have to reply that I did write the article, with a meaning, and that this was wise. The Professor has in fact three questions: (1) "The whole course of Nature considered as a succession of phenomena is conditioned solely by causes." This is not the same as (2) "In the action of which causes no regard to consequences is either traceable by human investigation or necessary to foresee the phenomena." (3) "Is the above postulate consistent with sound doctrine?"

I answer the *first* question affirmatively, only I do not favor the terribly metaphysical word "conditioned" used by scientists in the present day so constantly and so vaguely. With me as with Mill, a physical condition is merely one of the elements of a complex cause. The Professor evidently sets before

him a scowling theologian who will not allow him to find out a physical cause of the phenomena of Nature. I admit without reservation that in the course of Nature every occurrence proceeds from an antecedent cause. "This is a principle founded on a limited series of observations and extended by induction to the whole course of Nature." I am not required here to take up the subject of miracles — say the miracles of healing wrought by our Lord to show that he came to cure the evil in our world. A miracle I define as an event produced by causes not in Nature but beyond it. Miracles are acknowledged by all to be comparatively few and exceptional, and they accomplish their end because they are so. Leaving out miracles, and creation, which belongs to the same order, I hold that in the course of Nature every occurrence is produced by antecedent causes.

I do not very well know what he means by the *third* question, that his postulate is consistent with "sound doctrine," a phrase which he acknowledges to be "vague." If he means by it simply "truth," then I hold as to whatever is established by induction, not that it is consistent with, but that *it is* sound doctrine. If he means by it religious doctrine, we might have to begin with settling what is sound doctrine. I hold very emphatically that truths of science are to be determined solely by inductive evidence. I believe that in the end no truth of science will be found inconsistent with the truths of religion. They may appear to be so, but this only because we have misinterpreted Nature or misinterpreted Scripture. The ground is now cleared. I admit the *first* question. The *third* is somewhat out of place. But I admit it if the *second* is properly answered. It is sound doctrine in science and in nearly all religions that God is traceable in his works.

The *second* question is the only one in dispute between us. "In the action of Nature, is there no regard to consequences traceable by human investigation, or necessary to foresee the consequences?" Again we have two questions under the appearance of one. But the two are connected and may be answered

together. The inquiry is a very important one. It is not exactly, "Is there a God?" but it is "whether his existence is shown by his works." He who asserts that there is no regard to consequences traceable in mundane action is setting aside that argument for the Divine existence which the Scriptures sanction (Ps. xix:1, Rom. i:20), and which the great body of mankind have acknowledged to be valid.

Of course I allow that physical causes do not in themselves have any regard for consequences, and that they do not foresee phenomena. The chemical elements are as ready to combine to produce poison as to produce food, and they do not know or feel the pain or pleasure resulting from their action. I do not believe, with pantheists, that intention and end are immanent in Nature. But, discovering these in the dispositions and adaptations of agents, I argue a cause above them, with a plan and purpose. The title of his paper is "Law and Design." He evidently regards "Law" and "Design" as inconsistent with each other, as opponents and rivals. In opposition, I hold that —

I. *There is design in law.* The word law as applied to physical phenomena is vague. Nature in its ultimate analysis seems to consist of bodies with their properties. These bodies are supposed to consist of atoms, and these combined make masses. Do we know the ultimate properties of bodies molecular or molar? All bodies fall under our notice in masses, and the properties are in combination. In their combination they act in an orderly manner; and this seems to be what is meant by law. They are called by such names as laws of phenomena, general laws, co-ordinations, and appear as uniformities, types, periodicities. They are all composite, and are the result of a number of properties adjusted to each other. Such are the seasons, the forms of plants and animals, the evolution of children from parents, and, it may be, of one variety or species of plant or animal from another. Their regularity implies a plan, and consequently design. In particular they are suited to man — or, if any prefer it, man is suited to them; or, as I prefer it, the two are suited to each other. Some people un-

reasonably complain that things should proceed according to regular laws; as, for instance, that fire should always burn, and would rather that God should make them act according to circumstances, and interpose to stop fire from burning a poor man's house or a cathedral. But under such a Divine government no one could foresee the future or provide for it, could know that fire would prepare his food for eating, could have even a motive to partake of food, for he could not know whether food would nourish him.

There are cases in which we can see that there is law which enables us to "foresee" and "predict," and this not by tracing effects to causes, but simply by discovering a pre-ordained order. Professor Peirce tells that at a meeting of a scientific association Agassiz was asked to draw the form of a fish, such as must be in a certain period were one to cast up, and that he went to the board and drew the form. Professor Sedgwick, who was present, now took off a napkin and showed fishes of that very epoch, and the form was found to be the same. Here we have a prediction, not by the law of causality — for the same causes differently disposed might have produced a very different form — but by the law of teleology, or rather homology, implying a plan devised by intelligence.

II. *There is design in the adaptation of one object and agent to another*, whereby special ends are accomplished. It is not needful that I should dwell on these. We have them in Paley, in the Bridgewater Treatises, in the works of Sir C. Bell, Brougham, and many others, accessible to all. We see them in every organ of the body, in the joints, the muscles, the eye, the ear, the hand, and on the discovery of them everyone spontaneously looks for a cause in a designing mind — we feel that we have to abnegate our intelligence if we do not yield to the conviction. An eminent French philosopher, M. Janet, in a work on "Final Causes," lately translated, has defended the arguments and answered objections. There is no antithesis, as the Professor seems to think there is, between efficient and final cause. Aristotle, who introduced the phrases, discovered both, as did also Bacon, and the profoundest think-

ers of ancient and modern times. I presume that the Professor sees both the efficient and final in his own telescope: the former in the undulations of light and the glass suited to each other, and the latter in the causes being made to serve an end. The argument is *a fortiori* when we discover the efficient causes in the light, the coats and humors and cones made to form an image on the back of the eye.

The argument is from the evidently designed concurrence of natural causes. Chance, in its largest sense, is an event (1) without a cause, or (2) without a purpose. The scientific philosopher knows that there is no physical occurrence without a cause. The religious philosopher believes that there is no event without a purpose. Is there, then, no such thing as chance? I believe that there is no event without a cause and a purpose too. But there may be *coincidences* of events in which there is no design. I do not know that there must be design when, in a promiscuous company, half the people have the same Christian name, in the resemblance of certain rocks to the head of Bonaparte, or in so many eminent men having been born in 1769. But surely where there is room for chance there may be room for design; where there is room for undesigned coincidences there may be room for designed concurrences. When I notice a combination of independent agencies to effect a beneficent end, such as the eye, the ear, the hand, I see clear traces of a purpose. I place under the same head the provisions which have been made beforehand, and from the beginning, for the encouraging of virtue, for the restraining of evil, for hastening on the cause of religion and humanity, for answering prayer, and for relieving distress.

Professor Newcomb puts the case of the burning of a theatre, and supposes that, on inquiring into its meaning, three answers might be given. I do not accept his answers, and I propound three others, wishing my readers to compare his with mine: 1. The occurrence was produced by causes which we should inquire into, and which we may or may not be able to discover. 2. These causes were set a-going by God, and have



fulfilled his purpose. 3. We may or may not be able to find out the purpose. In all cases religion, by its highest authority, forbids us to argue the existence of wickedness because the persons have suffered. "Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans because they suffered such things? I tell you nay." This does not preclude us, when the wickedness has been proved, from discovering an intended connection between the sin and its punishment. I can believe both in a physical agency and a moral purpose.

I may remark here that there seems, among some of our scientists in the present day, to be a derangement of mental vision produced by their gazing exclusively on some one object. God has given to every man two eyes; and there are benefits derived from binocular vision — it enables us, as the Irishman said, to look round a corner, and see more than one side of an object. But by looking so long through a microscope some seem to have become one-eyed. There is no good end to be gained by setting the two schools to which

the Professor refers, the scientific and the theological, against each other. The business of the physicist may be simply to discover mechanical force, and of the physiologist to trace the processes of life, and of the psychologist to discover the faculties of the mind. The business of the theologian is to discover the operations of God. He is a *narrow* man who in inquiring into Nature can discover only mechanical force — while he overlooks vital and psychical agencies. He is also a narrow man who on finding these efficient causes overlooks that evidently designed concurrence of efficient causes which constitutes final cause. On the other hand, the religious man is so far a narrow man who will not allow scientists to discover physical cause. The truly enlightened man will delight to discover both, and will see no inconsistency between them. In particular, while seeing efficient causes manifesting the power of God, he also discovers benignant ends exhibiting the wisdom and goodness of God.

JAMES MCCOSH

## John Fiske

(1842-1901)

AFTER a precocious childhood, John Fiske moved on to a turbulent undergraduate career at Harvard. He had become a disciple of Herbert Spencer, and since the doctrine of evolution was still very much suspect in academic circles his enthusiasm brought him under the suspicion of the authorities who warned him of expulsion. After graduation he was admitted to the bar, but decided to devote himself exclusively to writing. The situation at Harvard having changed with the advent of Charles W. Eliot, he was asked to give a series of lectures there, and later became assistant librarian. He published *The Outline of Cosmic Philosophy* in 1874. Five years later, having resigned as librarian at Harvard, he delivered a course of lectures on American history at the Old South Church and thus started his career as historian. He continued to write widely in the field of philosophy, however, publishing *Through Nature to God*, in 1899. He was not an original scholar, but he did contribute to an understanding and acceptance of the theory of evolution.

### THROUGH NATURE TO GOD

#### THE DRAMATIC UNITY OF NATURE<sup>1</sup>

Now in these strong assertions it seems to me that the Calvinist is much more nearly in accord with our modern knowledge than are Plato and Mill. It is not wise to hazard statements as to what the future may bring forth, but I do not see how the dualism implied in all these attempts to refer good and evil to different creative sources can ever be seriously maintained again. The advance of modern science carries us irresistibly to what some German philosophers called mon-

ism, but I prefer to call it monotheism. In getting rid of the Devil and regarding the universe as the multiform manifestation of a single all-pervading Deity, we become for the first time pure and uncompromising monotheists, — believers in the ever-living, unchangeable, and all-wise Heavenly Father, in whom we may declare our trust without the faintest trace of mental reservation.

If we can truly take such a position, and hold it rationally, it is the modern science so apt to be decried by the bats and owls of

<sup>1</sup> *Through Nature to God*, pp. 22-26, 48-53, 54-56, 117-26, 127-30. Boston: 1899. Reprinted with the permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.

orthodoxy that justifies us in doing so. For what is the philosophic purport of these beautiful and sublime discoveries with which the keen insight and patient diligence of modern students of science are beginning to be rewarded? What is the lesson that is taught alike by the correlation of forces, by spectrum analysis, by the revelations of chemistry as to the subtle behavior of molecules inaccessible to the eye of sense, by the astronomy that is beginning to sketch the physical history of countless suns in the firmament, by the palaeontology which is slowly unravelling the wonders of past life upon the earth through millions of ages? What is the grand lesson that is taught by all this? It is the lesson of the unity of nature. To learn it rightly is to learn that all the things that we can see and know, in the course of our life in this world, are so intimately woven together that nothing could be left out without reducing the whole marvellous scheme to chaos. Whatever else may be true, the conviction is brought home to us that in all this endless multifariousness there is one single principle at work, that all is tending toward an end that was involved from the very beginning, if one can speak of beginnings and ends where the process is eternal. The whole universe is animated by a single principle of life, and whatever we see in it, whether to our half-trained understanding and narrow experience it may seem to be good or bad, is an indispensable part of the stupendous scheme. As Aristotle said, so long ago, in one of those characteristic flashes of insight into the heart of things in which no one has ever excelled him, in nature there is nothing that is out of place or interpolated, as in an ill-constructed drama.

Today we can begin to realize how much was implied in this prophetic hint of Aristotle's, for we are forced to admit that whatever may be the function of evil in this world, it is unquestionably an indispensable function, and not something interpolated from without. Whatever exists is part of the dramatic whole, and this can quickly be proved. The goodness in the world — all that we love and praise and emulate — we are ready enough to admit into our scheme of

things, and to rest upon it our belief in God. The misery, the pain, the wickedness, we would fain leave out. But if there were no such thing as evil, how could there be such a thing as goodness? Or to put it somewhat differently, if we had never known anything but goodness, how could we ever distinguish it from evil? How could we recognize it as good? How would its quality of goodness in any wise interest or concern us? This question goes down to the bottom of things, for it appeals to the fundamental conditions according to which conscious intelligence exists at all. Its answer will therefore be likely to help us. It will not enable us to solve the problem of evil, enshrouded as it is in a mystery impenetrable by finite intelligence, but it will help us to state the problem correctly; and surely this is no small help. In the mere work of purifying our intellectual vision there is that which heals and soothes us. To learn to see things without distortion is to prepare one's self for taking the world in the right mood, and in this we find strength and consolation.

#### MAN'S RISE FROM THE INNOCENCE OF BRUTEHOOD

We have first to note that in various ways the action of natural selection has been profoundly modified in the course of the development of mankind from a race of inferior creatures. One of the chief factors in the production of man was the change that occurred in the direction of the working of natural selection, whereby in the line of man's direct ancestry the variations in intelligence came to be seized upon, cherished, and enhanced, to the comparative neglect of variations in bodily structure. The physical differences between man and ape are less important than the physical differences between African and South American apes. The latter belong to different zoological families, but the former do not. Zoologically, man is simply one genus in the old-world family of apes. Psychologically, he has travelled so far from apes that the distance is scarcely measurable. This transcendent contrast is primarily due to the change in the direction of the working of natural selection. The consequences of

this change were numerous and far-reaching. One consequence was that gradual lengthening of the plastic period of infancy which enabled man to become a progressive creature, and organized the primeval semi-human horde into definite family groups. I have elsewhere expounded this point, and it is known as my own especial contribution to the theory of evolution.

Another associated consequence, which here more closely concerns us, was the partial stoppage of the process of natural selection in remedying unfitness. A quotation from Herbert Spencer will help us to understand this partial stoppage: "As fast as the faculties are multiplied, so fast does it become possible for the several members of a species to have various kinds of superiorities over one another. While one saves its life by higher speed, another does the like by clearer vision, another by keener scent, another by quicker hearing, another by greater strength, another by unusual power of enduring cold or hunger, another by special sagacity, another by special timidity, another by special courage. . . . Now . . . each of these attributes, giving its possessor an extra chance of life, is likely to be transmitted to posterity. But" it is not nearly so likely to be increased by natural selection. For "if those members of the species which have but ordinary" or even deficient shares of some valuable attribute "nevertheless survive by virtue of other superiorities which they severally possess, then it is not easy to see how this particular attribute can be" enhanced in subsequent generations by natural selection.

These considerations apply especially to the human race with its multitudinous capacities, and I can better explain the case by a crude and imperfect illustration than by a detailed and elaborate statement. If an individual antelope falls below the average of the herd in speed, he is sure to become food for lions, and thus the high average of speed in the herd is maintained by natural selection. But if an individual man becomes a drunkard, though his capabilities be ever so much curtailed by this vice, yet the variety of human faculty furnishes so many hooks with which to keep one's hold upon life that he may sin

long and flagrantly without perishing; and if the drunkard survives, the action of natural selection in weeding out drunkenness is checked. There is thus a wide interval between the highest and lowest degrees of completeness in living that are compatible with maintenance of life. Mankind has so many other qualities beside the bad ones, which enable it to subsist and achieve progress in spite of them, that natural selection — which always works through death — cannot come into play.

Now it is because of this *interval* between the highest and lowest degrees of completeness of living that are compatible with the mere maintenance of life, that men can be distinguished as morally bad or morally good. In inferior animals, where there is no such interval, there is no developed morality or conscience, though in a few of the higher ones there are the germs of these things. Morality comes upon the scene when there is an alternative offered of leading better lives or worse lives. And just as up to this point the actions of the forefathers of mankind have been determined by the pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain, so now they begin to be practically determined by the pursuit of goodness and avoidance of evil. This rise from a bestial to a moral plane of existence involves the acquirement of the knowledge of good and evil. Conscience is generated to play a part analogous to that played by the sense of pain in the lower stages of life, and to keep us from wrongdoing. To the mere love of life, which is the conservative force that keeps the whole animal world in existence, there now comes gradually to be superadded the feeling of religious aspiration, which is nothing more nor less than the yearning after the highest possible completeness of spiritual life. In the lower stages of human development this religious aspiration has as yet but an embryonic existence, and moral obligations are still but imperfectly recognized. It is only after long ages of social discipline, fraught with cruel afflictions and grinding misery, that the moral law becomes dominant and religious aspiration intense and abiding in the soul. When such a stage is reached, we have at last in man a creature

different in kind from his predecessors, and fit for an everlasting life of progress, for a closer and closer communion with God in beatitude that shall endure.

#### THE RELATIVITY OF EVIL

As we survey the course of this wonderful evolution, it begins to become manifest that moral evil is simply the characteristic of the lower state of living as looked at from the higher state. Its existence is purely relative, yet it is profoundly real, and in a process of perpetual spiritual evolution its presence in some hideous form throughout a long series of upward stages is indispensable. Its absence would mean stagnation, quiescence, unprogressiveness. For the moment we exercise conscious choice between one course of action and another, we recognize the difference between better and worse, we foreshadow the whole grand contrast between good and bad. In the process of spiritual evolution, therefore, evil must needs be present. But the nature of evolution also requires that it should be evanescent. In the higher stages that which is worse than the best need no longer be positively bad. After the nature of that which the upward-striving soul abhors has been forever impressed upon it, amid the long vicissitudes of its pilgrimage through the dark realms of sin and expiation, it is at length equipped for its final sojourn.

In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love.

From the general analogies furnished in the process of evolution, we are entitled to hope that, as it approaches its goal and man comes nearer to God, the fact of evil will lapse into a mere memory, in which the shadowed past shall serve as a background for the realized glory of the present.

Thus we have arrived at the goal of my argument. We can at least begin to realize distinctly that unless our eyes had been opened at some time, so that we might come to know the good and the evil, we should never have become fashioned in God's image. We should have been the denizens of a world of puppets, where neither morality nor religion could have found place or meaning.

The mystery of evil remains a mystery still, but it is no longer a harsh dissonance such as greeted the poet's ear when the doors of hell were thrown open; for we see that this mystery belongs among the profound harmonies in God's creation. This reflection may have in it something that is consoling as we look forth upon the ills of the world. Many are the pains of life, and the struggle with wickedness is hard, its course is marked with sorrow and tears. But assuredly its deep impress upon the human soul is the indispensable background against which shall be set hereafter the eternal joys of heaven!

#### MATERNITY AND THE EVOLUTION OF ALTRUISM

From an early period of the life-history of our planet, the preservation of the species had obviously become quite as imperative an end as the preservation of individuals; one is at first inclined to say more imperative, but if we pause long enough to remember that total failure to preserve individuals would be equivalent to immediate extinction of the species, we see that the one requirement is as indispensable as the other. Individuals must be preserved, and the struggle for life is between them; species must be preserved, and in the rivalry those have the best chance in which the offspring are either most redundant in numbers or are best cared for. In plants and animals of all but the higher types, the offspring are spores or seeds, larvae or spawn, or self-maturing eggs. In the absence of parental care the persistence of the species is ensured by the enormous number of such offspring. A single codfish, in a single season, will lay six million eggs, nearly all of which perish, of course, or else in a few years the ocean could not hold all the codfishes. But the princess in the Arabian tale, who fought with the malignant Jinni, could not for her life pick up all the scattered seeds of the pomegranate; and in like manner of the codfish eggs, one in a million or so escapes and the species is maintained. But in the highest types of animal life in birds and mammals — with their four-chambered hearts, completely arterialized blood, and enhanced consciousness — parental care becomes effective in

protecting the offspring and the excessive production diminishes. With birds, the necessity of maintaining a high temperature for the eggs leads to the building of nests, to a division of labor in the securing of food, to the development of a temporary maternal instinct, and to conjugal alliances which in some birds last for a lifetime. As the eggs become effectively guarded the number diminishes, till instead of millions there are half a dozen. When it comes to her more valuable products, Nature is not such a reckless squanderer after all. So with mammals, for the most part the young are in litters of half a dozen or so; but in Man, with his prolonged and costly infancy, parental care reaches its highest development and concentration in rearing children one by one.

From the dawn of life, I need hardly say, all the instincts that have contributed to the preservation of offspring must have been favored and cultivated by natural selection, and in many cases even in types of life very remote from Humanity, such instincts have prompted to very different actions from such as would flow from the mere instinct of self-preservation. If you thrust your walking-stick into an ant-heap, and watch the wild hurry and confusion that ensues when part of the interior is laid bare, you will see that all the workers are busy in moving the larvae into places of safety. It is not exactly a maternal instinct, for the workers are not mothers, but it is an altruistic instinct involving acts of self-devotion. So in the case of fish that ascend rivers or bays at spawning time, the actions of the whole shoal are determined by a temporarily predominant instinct that tends toward an altruistic result. In these and lower grades of life there is already something at work besides the mere struggle for life between individuals; there is something more than mere contention and slaughter; there is the effort towards cherishing another life than one's own. In these regions of animate existence we catch glimpses of the cosmic roots of love and self-sacrifice. For the simplest and rudest productions of Nature mere egoism might suffice, but to the achievement of any higher aim some adumbration of altruism was indispensable.

Before such divine things as love and self-sacrifice could spring up from their cosmic roots and put forth their efflorescence, it was necessary that conscious personal relations should become established between mother and infant. We have already observed the critical importance of these relations in the earliest stages of the evolution of human society. We may now add that the relation between mother and child must have furnished the first occasion for the sustained and regular development of the altruistic feelings. The capacity for unselfish devotion called forth in that relation could afterward be utilized in the conduct of individuals not thus related to one another.

Of all kinds of altruism the mother's was no doubt the earliest; it was the derivative source from which all other kinds were by slow degrees developed. In the evolution of these altruistic feelings, therefore — feelings which are an absolutely indispensable constituent in the process of ethical development — the first appearance of real maternity was an epoch of most profound interest and importance in the history of life upon the earth.

Now maternity, in the true and full sense of the word, is something which was not realized until a comparatively recent stage of the earth's history. God's highest work is never perfected save in the fulness of time. For countless ages there were parents and offspring before the slow but never aimless or wanton cosmic process had brought into existence the conscious personal relationship between mother and child. Protection of eggs and larvae scarcely suffices for the evolution of true maternity; the relation of moth to caterpillar is certainly very far from being a prototype of it. What spectacle could be more dreary than that of the Jurassic period, with its lords of creation, the oviparous dinosaurs, crawling or bounding over the land, splashing amid the mighty waters, whizzing bat-like through the air, horrible brutes innumerable, with bulky bodies and tiny brains, clumsy, coarse in fibre, and cold-blooded.

Dragons of the prime,  
That tare each other in their slime.

The remnants of that far-off dismal age have been left behind in great abundance, and from them we can easily reconstruct the loathsome picture of a world of dominating egoism, whose redemption through the evolution of true maternity had not yet effectively begun. For such a world might Caliban's theology indeed seem fitted. Nearly nine tenths of our planet's past life-history, measured in duration, had passed away without achieving any higher result than this — a fact which for impatient reformers may have in it some crumbs of consolation.

For, though the mills of God grind slowly, the cosmic process was aiming at something better than egoism and dinosaurs, and at some time during the long period of the Chalk deposits there began the tremendous world-wide rivalry between these dragons and the rising class of warm-blooded viviparous mammals which had hitherto played an insignificant part in the world. The very name of this class of animals is taken from the function of motherhood. The offspring of these "mamas" come into the world as recognizable personalities, so far developed that the relation between mother and child begins as a relation of personal affection. The newborn mammal is not an egg nor a caterpillar, but a baby, and the baby's dawning consciousness opens up a narrow horizon of sympathy and tenderness, a horizon of which the expansion shall in due course of ages reveal a new heaven and a new earth. At first the nascent altruism was crude enough, but it must have sufficed to make mutual understanding and co-operation more possible than before, it thus contributed to the advancement of mammalian intelligence, and prepared the way for gregariousness, by and by to culminate in sociality, as already described. In the history of creation the mammals were moderns, equipped with more effective means of ensuring survival than their oviparous antagonists. The development of complete mammality was no sudden thing. Some of the dinosaurs may have been ovoviviparous, like some modern serpents. The Australian duck-bill, a relic of the most ancient incipient mammality, is still oviparous; the opossum and kangaroo

preserve the record of a stage when viviparousness was but partially achieved; but with the advent of the placental mammals the break with old order of things was complete.

The results of the struggle are registered in the Eocene rocks. The ancient world had found its Waterloo. Gone were the dragons who so long had lorded it over both hemispheres — brontosaurus, iguanodons, plesiosaurs, laclaps, pterodactyls — all gone; their uncouth brood quite vanished from the earth, and nothing left alive as a reminder, save a few degenerate collateral kin, such as snakes and crocodiles, objects of dread and loathing to higher creatures. Never in the history of our planet has there been a more sweeping victory than that of the mammals, nor has Nature had any further occasion for victories of that sort. The mammal remains the highest type of animal existence, and subsequent progress has been shown in the perfecting of that type where most perfectible.

#### THE OMNIPRESENT ETHICAL TREND

With the evolution of true maternity Nature was ready to proceed to her highest grades of work. Intelligence was next to be lifted to higher levels, and the order of mammals with greatest prehensile capacities, the primates with their incipient hands, were the most favorable subjects in which to carry on this process. The later stages of the marvellous story we have already passed in review. We have seen the accumulating intelligence lengthen the period of infancy, and thus prolong the relations of loving sympathy between mother and child; we have seen the human family and human society thus brought into existence; and along therewith we have recognized the necessity laid upon each individual for conforming his conduct to a standard external to himself. At this point, without encountering any breach of continuity in the cosmic process, we crossed the threshold of the ethical world, and entered a region where civilization, or the gradual perfecting of the spiritual qualities, is henceforth Nature's paramount aim. To penetrate further into this region would be to follow the progress of civilization, while

the primitive canoe develops into the Cunard steamship, the hieroglyphic battle-sketch into epics and dramas, sun-catcher myths into the Newtonian astronomy, wandering tribes into mighty nations, the ethics of the clan into the moral law for all men. The story shows us Man becoming more and more clearly the image of God, exercising creative attributes, transforming his physical environment, incarnating his thoughts in visible and tangible shapes all over the world, and extorting from the abysses of space the secrets of vanished ages. From lowly beginnings, without breach of continuity, and through the cumulative action of minute and inconspicuous causes, the resistless momentum of cosmic events has tended toward such kind of consummation; and part and parcel of the whole process, inseparably wrapped up with every other part, has been the evolution of the sentiments which tend to subordinate mere egoism to unselfish and moral ends.

A narrow or partial survey might fail to make clear the solidarity of the cosmic process. But the history of creation, when broadly and patiently considered, brings home to us with fresh emphasis the profound truth of what Emerson once said, that "the lesson of life . . . is to believe what the years and the centuries say against the hours; to

resist the usurpation of particulars; to penetrate to their catholic sense." When we have learned this lesson, our misgivings vanish, and we breathe a clear atmosphere of faith. Though in many ways God's work is above our comprehension, yet those parts of the world's story that we can decipher well warrant the belief that while in Nature there may be divine irony, there can be no such thing as wanton mockery, for profoundly underlying the surface entanglement of her actions we may discern the omnipresent ethical trend. The moral sentiments, the moral law, devotion to unselfish ends, disinterested love, nobility of soul — these are Nature's most highly wrought products, latest in coming to maturity; they are the consummation, toward which all earlier prophecy has pointed. We are right, then, in greeting the rejuvenescent summer with devout faith and hope. Below the surface din and clashing of the struggle for life we hear the undertone of the deep ethical purpose, as it rolls in solemn music through the ages, its volume swelled by every victory, great or small, of right over wrong, till in the fulness of time, in God's own time, it shall burst forth in the triumphant chorus of Humanity purified and redeemed.



## PART FIVE

### *Idealism from William T. Harris to James E. Creighton*

---

THE rise of Idealism as a philosophical movement in the United States was governed by the immigration of German philosophy.<sup>1</sup> Though the German language itself was almost unknown to Americans at the beginning of the nineteenth century, by the end of that period study in German universities was almost an indispensable part of real graduate training. It is related that when George Ticknor wished to prepare himself for his work at Goettingen, he had to send to New Hampshire for a German dictionary, while a German grammar was hard to find in all New England. In those days America depended intellectually on England and Scotland. But by the time McCosh was writing his *Realistic Philosophy*, he had to note: "In the present day the Americans are still depending on the Europeans, and borrowing from them. The more earnest students go to Deutschland, and are ploughing, as Ulrici used to say, with the German heifer."<sup>2</sup>

The first infiltration of German philosophical ideas was through media like Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection*.<sup>3</sup> In succeeding decades, however, the influences were more direct. Large numbers of German emigrants came into the United States, especially into the Middle West, and numbers of Americans went abroad. H. P. Tappan, G. S. Morris, Friedrich Rauch, K. T. C. Follen, and Francis Lieber reflect this reciprocal movement. Moreover, in the 1830's and 1840's the following were studying in Germany: Horace Mann, George Bancroft, George Ticknor, Henry Barnard, Henry James, Sr., Calvin Stowe, F. Henry Hedge, and Edward Everett. On the whole it was the great tradition of classical German Idealism from Kant through Hegel and the romantics which made the greatest impact. But the later thinkers like Trendelenburg, Erdmann, Ulrici, Wundt, and Lotze contributed significantly. Woodbridge Riley<sup>4</sup> comments, "It may safely be said that the German influences on American thought have been the most significant and the most weighty of all the foreign influences."

To St. Louis belongs the distinction of being the home of the first Kant class in America. Here a large number of German intellectuals after the Civil War formed the St. Louis Philosophical Society (1866). The Kant Club was a small division of the society and met

<sup>1</sup> J. H. Muirhead, "How Hegel Came to America," *Philosophical Review*, 37.226-40 (1928).

<sup>2</sup> James McCosh, General Introduction (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1882), p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> 1825; American edition, 1829.

<sup>4</sup> *American Thought*, p. 229.

on Sunday afternoons at the house of W. T. Harris, where the members worked on a translation of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* by Henry Brokmeyer.

Harris and Brokmeyer constituted a strange team. Brokmeyer (1828-1906) was German born. He came to the United States at seventeen, studied in Georgetown College, Kentucky, and at Brown. Being dissatisfied there and in the East generally he went to Missouri. It is not known how or where he acquired his taste for Hegel, but in 1858 he was inducing Harris to commence work on Hegel's *Larger Logic*, which was to Brokmeyer a veritable Bible. Harris was a young Connecticut schoolmaster who migrated to St. Louis in 1857 as a teacher of the then new Pitman shorthand. He possessed a slight acquaintance with German thought through New England Transcendentalism as presented by Alcott. But Brokmeyer's influence was the decisive factor in helping Harris embrace the Hegelian philosophy. Harris says of Brokmeyer: "Mr. Brokmeyer, whose acquaintance I made in 1858, is, and was even at that time, a thinker of the same order of mind as Hegel, and before reading Hegel, except the few pages in Hedge's *German Prose Writers*, had divined Hegel's chief ideas."<sup>1</sup>

Along with Harris and Brokmeyer, the Kant Club included Denton J. Snider, Carl Schurz, Joseph Pulitzer, J. G. Werner, George H. Howison, and Thomas Davidson. These men were responsible for the emanation of German idealism over the Middle West. Deliberate colonization of the movement took place in centers such as Chicago, Milwaukee, Cincinnati, and Denver. Even in New England in due time (1879) Harris himself was destined to be the organizer of the famed Concord School of Philosophy; for, though Alcott was the nominal head, the directive genius was Harris. The founding of the Concord School represented, as Morris Cohen says, "the union of New England transcendentalism with Germanic scholarship and idealism."<sup>2</sup> By this time idealism was taking root in many places in the United States.

Harris made a serious attempt at a systematic study of Hegel. His idealism developed in sharp opposition to the agnosticism of Herbert Spencer, whose works were then attracting considerable attention. In the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* Harris comments: "We, as a people, buy immense editions of John Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer, Comte, Hamilton, Cousin, and others; one can trace the appropriation and digestion of their thoughts in all the leading articles of our Reviews. . . . If this is American philosophy, the editor thinks that it may be very much elevated by absorbing and digesting more refined aliment."<sup>3</sup> This antipathy to agnosticism and positivism is shown in the statement of purpose of the St. Louis Philosophical Society: "to encourage the study and development of Speculative Philosophy."

The phrase "speculative philosophy" thus introduced into philosophical usage became part of the title of the first philosophical periodical in the English language, *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*. The first number of the *Journal* contained a critique of Herbert Spencer by Harris. Harris points out that Spencer's assumption, derived from Sir William

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from H. G. Townsend, *Philosophical Ideas in the United States*, p. 118. See C. M. Perry, *The St. Louis School in American Philosophy*.

<sup>2</sup> William Peterfield Trent, *et al.*, editors, *Cambridge History of American Literature* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1933), vol. III, p. 236 note.

<sup>3</sup> Preface, vol. I, no. 4, December, 1867.

Hamilton, that we cannot conceive the infinite, is due to confusing the process of conception and the process of imagination. For even though we cannot picture a universal or infinite process we can think (conceive) it. Spencer's whole philosophy is sense-bound. Harris follows Hegel in holding that the finite particulars of sense perception are not ultimate reality. All particular things depend upon an environment. We are thus led dialectically to affirm the correlation of all forces in a dynamic whole and the mutual dependence of all objects on one another within a self-limited infinite Absolute Activity. In the main selection below Harris expounds the dialectical principle of "the speculative" as a constructive reply to agnosticism; it is the reply of Reason to the standpoints of sense and the understanding.

*The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* was the chief instrument of Harris's determination to "make Hegel talk English." But the *Journal* had a far wider historical significance. In the pages of this periodical appeared the first native translations of Fichte and Schelling and other German philosophies. Thus European thought was brought directly into American literature. Equally important is the fact that the *Journal* provided a forum for a generation of young philosophers: Peirce, Howison, Royce, James, and Dewey, to mention some of the outstanding ones. One of these, Royce, was destined to be the most outstanding idealist that America has produced. He was, however, not a member of the St. Louis movement.

"To any young American student of philosophy," writes R. F. Alfred Hoernlé, "who rejects Absolute Idealism I would say that he has no right to dissent or condemn, unless he has first earned that right by a thorough study and understanding of Royce."<sup>1</sup> Royce's most ambitious work is *The World and the Individual*, being the Gifford Lectures. The development of Royce's philosophy reflects not only the impact of German idealism and romanticism, but also the influences of Peirce and James. The logical studies of Peirce and the voluntarism of James become increasingly effective in Royce in his later works.

Two of the basic questions for Royce are: What is an idea? and: How can an idea be related to reality? An idea, we are told, must be defined in terms of its internal purpose and in terms of its external reference. The external function is secondary to the internal meaning, which is always the expression of an interest, a desire, or a volition. The external meaning is an idea's reference beyond itself to an object. These two meanings, though seemingly opposed to each other, are not so in the end because, as we have already noted, the validity of an idea is primarily determined by its internal meaning. In other words, the World as Idea when fully developed expresses through itself the World as Fact. In the Gifford Lectures Royce urges the method of the World as Idea and rejects as false leads the methods of realism, mysticism, and critical rationalism, though the latter is held to be good as far as it goes. The way of the World as Idea discloses four relations between the internal and the external meanings: (1) They are inseparably joined. (2) The Other which is sought in knowledge is an Individual which requires the unity of the internal meaning (the *What*) and the external meaning (the *That*). (3) The two meanings are

<sup>1</sup> See the essay, "The Revival of Idealism in the United States," in Clifford Barrett, editor, *Contemporary Idealism in America*, p. 301.

mutually determining, for the external meanings must answer the questions raised by the internal meanings. (4) In the end the internal meanings are supreme. The Other which knowledge seeks is but the completion of the idea's own embodied purpose or will. A completely determined idea would end the quest and this object would be the real object. Thus Royce holds that truth and reality are ultimately complete Idea. This Idea, he tries to show, is a Self-Conscious Knower.

Emphasis on the internal meaning of an idea means, for Royce, a recognition of the voluntaristic phase of knowledge. This emphasis is especially prominent in his presidential address delivered before the American Philosophical Association in 1903, "The Eternal and the Practical." This article is of special relevance to a study of pragmatism as well as of absolute idealism. The issue turns about the nature of truth and the relation of "pure" pragmatism to it. Royce does not completely reject pragmatism, but he modifies it in the interest of absolute truth and an absolute knower. "In order to conceive our judgments as true," he says, "we need conceive them as partial functions of a self which is so inclusive of all possible points of view regarding our object as to remain invariant in the presence of all additional points of view, and so conscious of its own finished and invariable purpose as to define an ought that determines the truth or falsity of every possible judgment about this object." "If there is no such self, no judgment is either true or false." Royce means that the Eternal is the true satisfier of finite volition. The Eternal is a Person; his consciousness is the whole, the totality, within which the temporal process completely falls and is present all at once.

In his later writings, due in part to the influence of Peirce, he emphasized the world as a community of minds and he wrote of knowledge as a social process, a community of interpretation. The Absolute is conceived more as "the Spirit of Community," without, however, losing his supreme religious status.

Royce's emphasis on absolute idealism was not intended to vitiate the individuality of the finite self. Reality is a society of persons whose ground and unity reside in God's experience which includes all the fragmentary experiences of finite persons, yet without negating their reality. In the Absolute all finite selves achieve true personality, but they are not fused in a vague togetherness. Only individual experience is real. It is significant that the disciples of Royce, especially Hocking and Miss Calkins, have earnestly defended the cause of finite individuality. Indeed, this interest has motivated practically all American idealists. Howison, whom we shall next consider, entered into a deep and serious debate with Royce on this very issue.<sup>1</sup>

George H. Howison is outstanding as a great American teacher of philosophy. Mezes, McGilvary, Bakewell, and Lovejoy are among his influential students. As a writer Howison was not prolific. Neither did he work out an imposing systematic statement of his own philosophy. His thinking and writing was, however, closely associated with the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, the *Psychological Review*, the *Hibbert Journal*, and the *Kant Studien*. A volume called *The Limits of Evolution and Other Essays* approaches to some extent to a systematic statement of his views.

<sup>1</sup> See Josiah Royce, *et al*, *The Conception of God*.

Howison illustrates the fact that the Hegelian emphasis in St. Louis did not convert all the Kant Club members to absolute idealism. His position is spiritual pluralism, or personal idealism. Like Harris he combats the evolutionary agnosticism of Spencer. On the other hand, however, he fights with equal vigor against what he regards as the pantheistic and solipsistic tendencies of absolute idealism. His emphasis reflects the standpoint of Leibniz. Shortly before the turn of the century, when Royce was invited to the University of California to deliver a lecture, "The Conception of God," there developed a debate in which Royce, Le Conte, Mezes, and Howison participated, known as the "Great Philosophical Discussion." Howison's attack on the tendency of absolutism to obliterate finite individuality is acknowledged by Royce to have caused him to modify his argument. Finite consciousness is unique and indispensable because it is the source and warrant of the knowledge of nature. The real is mental and plural. In Howison's own words, "the only thing absolutely real is mind, . . . all material and all temporal existence take their being from mind, from consciousness that thinks and experiences; . . . out of consciousness they all issue, to consciousness are presented, and presence to consciousness constitutes their entire reality and entire existence."

"The Limits of Evolution" states the claims of personal idealism against both the agnosticism of the current evolutionary philosophy and its confusion of the phenomenal and the noumenal. Howison shows the legitimate limits of the application of the concept of evolution. Some of the other leading ideas are that all science rests on the assumption of an all-pervading rationality in things. The latter implies, in turn, the postulate that the necessity, affirmed by philosophers in the connection of phenomena, issues from the organic action of mind itself and has meaning, therefore, as applied to cosmic evolution only if ultimate reality is a divine mind. Moreover, evolution as a judgment about nature, when applied on the cosmic scale, is essentially a teleological idea. Any real causality in the evolutionary process is really the causality of self-consciousness. Howison follows Kant in treating nature as studied by science as phenomenal. Reality is a universal society of rational and free individuals. A nature common to all members of the society is the ground of the freedom of each. This common nature is a self-conscious intelligence, the ideal Type to which all finite intelligences approximate.

Personal idealism was also vigorously expounded by Borden Parker Bowne.

Bowne faced practically the same problems as Howison. Resembling Howison's philosophy in many respects, his thought is more systematic and completely worked out. In contrast to Royce, for whom philosophy was weighted on the side of intellectualism in spite of all voluntaristic affirmations, Bowne's idealism rests squarely on the primacy of the practical reason. The speculative reason, however, is not ignored. Royce, Howison, and Bowne all defended the rights of the religious consciousness against positivism, materialism, and naturalism. From the beginning to the end of his career Bowne conducted a relentless attack on the philosophy of Herbert Spencer.

American philosophers have been divided on Bowne's significance. He has been accused of substituting faith for reason, theology for philosophy. On the other hand, he has been cited as "one of the keenest of American metaphysicians."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Royce, *The Conception of God*, p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> *Cambridge History of American Literature*, III:240 n.

There are broad historical bases for Bowne's Personalism. Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Berkeley, Leibniz, Kant, Lotze, and Renouvier are its main sources. The special emphasis in Bowne is a personalistic synthesis of Berkeley, Kant, and Lotze. In his philosophy of religion there is also a marked pragmatic strain. William James and he developed a fine relationship and mutual appreciation. Personalism conceives reality as a self or belonging to a self. By self is meant a unitary, self-identifying conscious agent. A self capable of the realization of values may be called a person. Like most idealists Bowne held that synopsis is the ultimate form of intelligibility. All parts can be understood only when interpreted through their membership in the whole person to which they belong. Like other idealists Bowne also held that reality is rational and hence in some way an organic whole. Again, he, with most idealism, held to an ontological status for values. In the final synopsis of thought all reality must be viewed as conscious experience. This means that concrete reality is a self or person.

Bowne called his philosophy a transcendental empiricism. This statement means: (1) that personality is not to be explained in terms of logical categories, but that categories are to be explained in terms of personality. (2) Transcendental empiricism emphasizes particular, concrete experience and is suspicious of abstractions. Hence (3) Personalism is in a sense realistic. (4) Bowne emphasized building on the fact that every item of experience belongs to a self. From the epistemological viewpoint the theory is dualistic. Idea and object are numerically distinct. In the building up of experience the mind employs immanent principles called categories. These are of two kinds, phenomenal and noumenal or metaphysical. In the former group belong space, time, motion, quantity, and number. These contain the basis for mechanical science. But they furnish no metaphysical explanation. In the class of metaphysical categories are being, quality, identity, causality, and purpose. Bowne regarded necessity and possibility as doubtful categories. Since the former group of categories are phenomenal, science must be regarded positivistically; it is restricted to the phenomenal. The real is the personal, a Supreme Person is the ground both of the system of nature and the society of persons. Bowne's phenomenalistic immaterialism is closely related to his nominalism. The fallacy of the abstract (or of the universal) he says is the universal fallacy. Spinoza, Hegel, and Spencer, he believed, were victims of this fallacy. Finally, Personalism is voluntaristic. To be is to act and to act is to will. Bowne stressed finite freedom and developed significantly the speculative values of this freedom. He showed how freedom is a necessary presupposition of any valid thinking.

The selection below is taken from *Personalism*. The chapter on "The Failure of Impersonalism" sums up the essentials of Bowne's critical work. The chief objects of attack are mechanistic sense-bound naturalism on the one hand and idealistic impersonalism on the other. The constructive alternative is personal theism. Hocking<sup>1</sup> has written of this chapter: "Thus 'personalism' becomes the distinctive name for Bowne's contribution to metaphysics, and as a summary of the curve of metaphysical speculation since Kant there is no more powerful and convincing chapter in metaphysical writing than that of Bowne on 'The Failure of Impersonalism.'"

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in F. J. McConnell, *Borden Parker Bowne*, p. 131. Originally in *Methodist Review*, vol. 104, 1922, p. 374.

The impact of mentalism in American idealism was modified by the speculative standpoint of James E. Creighton.

Though a writer of few books, Creighton has been a strong force in American philosophy through articles and essays, through criticism, through teaching, and as an editor. While the critic has taken precedence over the system builder, yet his constructive viewpoint is fairly evident. His fundamental attitude to the philosophical enterprise is: (1) that philosophy is a social enterprise; (2) that the history of philosophy forms an essential and integral part of philosophical discipline, and (3) that the philosophical attitude called "idealistic" is speculative, that is, logically concrete.<sup>1</sup>

His thought was greatly influenced by Hegelian philosophy, especially as developed by Bernard Bosanquet. He was a leading American exponent of what he called speculative idealism. The essay selected for the present volume presents this viewpoint. It reflects also his critical reaction to several streams of current thought, to absolute and personal idealism, to pragmatism, and to neo-realism. For Creighton there are two distinct types of idealism. Idealists, he insists, are themselves not always clear as to the fundamental distinction which must be recognized between these two types. The one type is mentalism, which insists that "everything is mental in character — of the content of mind or of the substance of mind." On this view external objects are "reduced" to internal states either of finite minds or of an all-inclusive consciousness. Berkeley's system represents this type. But mentalism must be rejected because it does not transcend the standpoint of existence.

As over against mentalism he adopts the standpoint of speculative idealism, or concrete experience. Experience is a complex term. It is at once "an explication or revelation of reality, a comprehension of the Mind of one's fellows, and a coming to consciousness on the part of the mind of the nature of its own intelligence." In other words, all knowledge postulates a system of experience which is "at once my experience, the experience of my fellow men, and the nature of reality." This order of experience is not a world of mere existence; values are constitutive in all facts. Fact and value are parts of a coherent unity of experience. Thus speculative idealism appeals to the principle of the concrete universal which recognizes that only the individual is real. But the individual is not simply subjective experience. Indeed, as Creighton says, "we could not have a rational experience in a universe consisting solely of a community of freely acting psychic beings. We need also a material system of things, an order to which we have to submit our intelligence and our will, an order that we are unable to bully or cajole, but which we can learn to control only by understanding and obedience."

In all this the Hegelian standpoint is apparent. The tendency in Kant to center the philosophical universe in the subject and to set subject and object transcendently in opposition to one another is rejected. The concrete world order is the proper starting place as well as the end of the quest of knowledge. Creighton was not dead set against pragmatism with its emphasis on purpose, but he felt it was not a complete description of the knowing situation. An objective interest, detached from personal and private ends, was required in true knowledge. As against Royce, Creighton urged that the Absolute was still replete with mentalistic prejudice, hence subjective. Moreover, he did not feel that

<sup>1</sup> K. Gilbert, "James E. Creighton as Writer and Editor," *The Journal of Philosophy*, 22 (1925), 258 ff.

the universe was necessarily of one piece or stuff. Then too, he felt that the conception of community in Royce did not demonstrably entail personality or even quasi-personality. Instead of the Roycean community, Creighton offered "the social nature of thinking." Individual minds are not cut off from one another and from the past and the future. Thinking is a joint enterprise in which the connecting principle is objective idea.

In the epoch which we have just described idealism was the most powerful movement in American philosophy. Indeed, to be a philosopher of standing at the turn of the century was to be an idealist. However, a new philosophical order was in the making. Among the attacks on idealism, that of the Neo-Realists was of singular importance. It was expressed in part in the much quoted article by R. B. Perry, "The Ego-Centric Predicament." This criticism is appended to the essays in Part V. Further note of Neo-Realism will be made below. Here we shall simply point out Perry's insistence that though we can never find an object without a subject, this fact has no force whatever in meeting the question whether an object can *exist* without a subject. Perry's use of the analytical method illustrates one of the fundamental instruments of the logic of the New Realism against Idealism.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### *I. Primary Sources:*

- HARRIS, WILLIAM TORREY, *HEGEL'S LOGIC: A BOOK ON THE GENESIS OF THE CATEGORIES OF THE MIND: A CRITICAL EXPOSITION*. Chicago: S. C. Griggs and Co., 1890 and 1895.
- HARRIS, WILLIAM TORREY, *INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF PHILOSOPHY*. Edited with a commentary by Marietta Kies. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1890.
- PERRY, C. M., *THE ST. LOUIS MOVEMENT IN PHILOSOPHY*. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1930.
- ROYCE, JOSIAH, *THE RELIGIOUS ASPECT OF PHILOSOPHY: A CRITIQUE OF THE BASIS OF CONDUCT AND OF FAITH*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1885.
- ROYCE, JOSIAH, *THE CONCEPTION OF GOD: A PHILOSOPHICAL DISCUSSION CONCERNING THE NATURE OF THE DIVINE IDEA AS A DEMONSTRABLE REALITY*. Co-author with G. H. Howison, J. Le Conte, and S. E. Mezes. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1897.
- ROYCE, JOSIAH, *STUDIES OF GOOD AND EVIL*. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1898.
- ROYCE, JOSIAH, *THE WORLD AND THE INDIVIDUAL*. 2 vols. (Being the Gifford Lectures.) New York: The Macmillan Company, 1900-1901.
- ROYCE, JOSIAH, *THE PHILOSOPHY OF LOYALTY*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1908.
- ROYCE, JOSIAH, "THE PRINCIPLES OF LOGIC," *ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL SCIENCES*. Vol. 1. Translated from the German by B. Ethel Meyer. London: The Macmillan Company, 1913.
- ROYCE, JOSIAH, *THE PROBLEM OF CHRISTIANITY*. 2 vols. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1913.
- HOWISON, G. H., *THE LIMITS OF EVOLUTION AND OTHER ESSAYS*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1901, 1905.
- HOWISON, G. H., *THE CONCEPTION OF GOD*. (See above under Royce.)
- BUCKHAM, J. W., and G. M. STRATTON, editors, *GEORGE HOLMES HOWISON: PHILOSOPHER AND TEACHER*. Selections with a biographical sketch. Berkeley, Cal.: University of California Press, 1934.
- BOWNE, BORDEN PARKER, *PHILOSOPHY OF THEISM*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887.
- BOWNE, BORDEN PARKER, *PRINCIPLES OF ETHICS*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1892.
- BOWNE, BORDEN PARKER, *THEORY OF THOUGHT AND KNOWLEDGE*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1897.



- BOWNE, BORDEN PARKER, *PERSONALISM*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1908.  
 BOWNE, BORDEN PARKER, *METAPHYSICS*. New York: American Book Company, 1882.  
 BOWNE, BORDEN PARKER, *KANT AND SPENCER*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1912.  
 CREIGHTON, J. E., *STUDIES IN SPECULATIVE IDEALISM*. H. R. Smart, editor. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1925.

## II. Secondary Sources:

- DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN BIOGRAPHY. Harris, Royce, Howison, Bowne.  
 BRIGHTMAN, E. S., "PERSONALISM AND THE INFLUENCE OF BOWNE," *PROCEEDINGS OF THE SIXTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF PHILOSOPHY*. E. S. Brightman, editor. New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1927.  
 CELL, G. C., "DIE PHILOSOPHIE IN NORD AMERIKA," in *UEBERWEG, GESCHICHTE DER PHILOSOPHIE*. Bd. V, S. 379-91.  
 COHEN, MORRIS, "A BRIEF SKETCH OF THE LATER PHILOSOPHY," in *THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE*, vol. III, pp. 226-65.  
 CREIGHTON, J. E., editor, *PAPERS IN HONOR OF JOSIAH ROYCE ON HIS SIXTIETH BIRTHDAY*. New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1916.  
 CUNNINGHAM, G. W., *THE IDEALISTIC ARGUMENT IN RECENT BRITISH AND AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY*. New York: The Century Company, 1933. See chaps. x, xi, xii, xiii.  
 GILBERT, K., "JAMES E. CREIGHTON AS WRITER AND EDITOR," *THE JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY*, 22:256-64 (1925).  
 HAMMOND, W. A., "JAMES E. CREIGHTON," *THE JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY*, 22:253-56 (1925).  
 KNUDSON, A. C., *THE PHILOSOPHY OF PERSONALISM*. New York: The Abingdon Press, 1927.  
 McCONNELL, F. J., *BORDEN PARKER BOWNE*. New York: The Abingdon Press, 1929.  
 METHODIST REVIEW. May-June, 1922. (The whole devoted to Bowne)  
 MÜLLER, G., *AMERIKANSISCHE PHILOSOPHIE*. S. 115-22, 137-71, 172-82.  
 PALMER, G. H., "IN DEDICATION JOSIAH ROYCE," in CLIFFORD BARRETT, editor, *CONTEMPORARY IDEALISM IN AMERICA*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1932. This also contains W. E. Hocking, "THE ONTOLOGICAL IDEA IN ROYCE AND OTHERS"  
 PERRY, R. B., in *THE SPIRIT OF WILLIAM JAMES* (New Haven, Conn.: The Yale University Press, 1938), chap. i.  
 RAMSDELL, E. T., "PRAGMATISM IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF BORDEN PARKER BOWNE," *THE PERSONALIST*, 15:305-15 (1934); 16:25-35, 132-41 (1935).  
 RILEY, I. W., *AMERICAN THOUGHT*.  
 ROGERS, A. K., *ENGLISH AND AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY SINCE 1800*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1922.  
 SABINE, G. H., "THE PHILOSOPHY OF JAMES EDWIN CREIGHTON," *THE PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW*, 34 (1925), 230-61.  
 SANTAYANA, G., *CHARACTER AND OPINION IN THE UNITED STATES* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920), chap. iv.  
 SCHAUB, E. L., editor, *WILLIAM TORREY HARRIS*. Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company, 1936.  
 THILLY, F., "THE PHILOSOPHY OF JAMES EDWIN CREIGHTON," *THE PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW*, 34:211-29 (1925).  
 TOWNSEND, H. G., *PHILOSOPHICAL IDEAS IN THE UNITED STATES*.  
 WIEMAN, H. N., and B. E. MELAND, *AMERICAN PHILOSOPHIES OF RELIGION*. Chicago: Willett, Clark and Company, 1936.



# William T. Harris

(1835-1909)

FROM being a Connecticut school teacher who migrated to St. Louis to teach shorthand, Harris rose first to be the leading light of the St. Louis Philosophical Society, then to prominence in the Concord School of Philosophy, and finally to national fame as United States Commissioner of Education. One of the key words in Harris's philosophy is "self-activity." He found it magnificently elaborated in Hegel, whom he sought to introduce to the Anglo-Saxon mind. He expounded its implications in *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*. He conceived of ultimate reality as cosmic self-activity, an idea which he made the touchstone of his pedagogical theory. Though not a great original thinker Harris's work stands at the fountainhead of the idealistic movement in America.

## THE JOURNAL OF SPECULATIVE PHILOSOPHY

### TO THE READER <sup>1</sup>

FOR the reason that a journal devoted exclusively to the interests of Speculative Philosophy is a rare phenomenon in the English language, some words may reasonably be expected from the Editors upon the scope and design of the present undertaking.

There is no need, it is presumed, to speak of the immense religious movements now going on in this country and in England. The tendency to break with the traditional and to accept only what bears for the soul its own justification, is widely active, and can end only in the demand that Reason shall find and establish a philosophical basis for all those great ideas which are taught as religious dogmas. Thus it is that side by side with the naturalism of such men as

Renan, a school of mystics is beginning to spring up who prefer to ignore utterly all historical wrappings, and cleave only to the speculative kernel itself. The vortex between the traditional faith and the intellectual conviction cannot be closed by renouncing the latter, but only by deepening it to speculative insight.

Likewise it will be acknowledged that the national consciousness has moved forward on a new platform during the past few years. The idea underlying our form of government had hitherto developed only one of its essential phases — that of brittle individualism — in which national unity seemed an external mechanism, soon to be entirely dispensed with, and the enterprise of the private man or of the corporation substituted for it. Now

<sup>1</sup> Vol. I, no. I (1867).

we have arrived at the consciousness of the other essential phase, and each individual recognizes his substantial side to be the State as such. The freedom of the citizen does not consist in the mere Arbitrary, but in the realization of the rational conviction which finds expression in established law. That this new phase of national life demands to be digested and comprehended, is a further occasion for the cultivation of the Speculative.

More significant still is the scientific revolution, working out especially in the domain of physics. The day of simple empiricism is past, and with the doctrine of "Correlation of Forces" there has arisen a stage of reflection that deepens rapidly into the purely speculative. For the further elucidation of

this important point the two following articles have been prepared. It is hoped that the first one will answer more definitely the question now arising in the mind of the reader, "What is this Speculative Knowing of which you speak?" and that the second one will show whither Natural Science is fast hastening.

With regard to the pretensions of this Journal, its editors know well how much its literary conduct will deserve censure and need apology. They hope that the substance will make up in some degree for deficiencies in form; and, moreover, they expect to improve in this respect through experience and the kind criticisms of friends.

## THE SPECULATIVE<sup>1</sup>

"WE NEED what Genius is unconsciously seeking, and, by some daring generalization of the universe, shall assuredly discover, a spiritual calculus, a *Novum Organon*, whereby nature shall be divined in the soul, the soul in God, matter in spirit, polarity resolved into unity; and that power which pulsates in all life, animates and builds all organizations, shall manifest itself as one universal deific energy, present alike at the outskirts and centre of the universe, whose centre and circumference are one; omniscient, omnipotent, self-subsisting, uncontained, yet containing all things in the unbroken synthesis of its being." — ("Calculus," *one of Alcott's "Orphic sayings."*)

At the end of the sixth book of Plato's *Republic*, after a characterization of the two grades of sensuous knowing and the grade of the understanding, "which is obliged to set out from hypotheses, for the reason that it does not deal with principles but only with results," we find the speculative grade of knowing characterized as "that in which the soul, setting out from an hypothesis, proceeds to an unhypothetical principle, and makes its way without the aid of [sensuous] images, but solely through ideas themselves."

The mathematical procedure which begins by hypothecating definitions, axioms, postulates, and the like, which it never examines nor attempts to deduce or prove, is the example given by Plato of the method of the Understanding, while he makes the Speculative Reason "to posit hypotheses by the Dialectic, *not as fixed principles*, but only as starting points, in order that, by removing them, it may arrive at the unhypothetical — the principle of the universe."

This most admirable description is fully endorsed by Aristotle, and firmly established in a two-fold manner:

1. In the *Metaphysics* (xi:7) he shows ontologically, starting with *motion* as a hypothesis, that the *self-moved* is the first principle; and this he identifies with the speculative, and the being of God.

2. In the *De Anima* (iii:5-8) he distinguished psychologically the "active intellect" as the highest form of knowing, as that which is its own object (Subject and object), and hence as containing its own end and aim in itself — as being infinite. He identifies this with the Speculative result, which he found ontologically as the Absolute.

Spinoza in his *Ethics* (Prop. xl. Schol. ii.,

<sup>1</sup> William T. Harris, *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, vol. i, no. 1.

and Prop. XLIV., Cor. II. of Part II) has well described the Speculative, which he names "*Scientia intuitiva*," as the thinking of things under the form of eternity, (*De natura rationis est res sub quadam specie aeternitatis percipere.*)

Though great diversity is found in respect to form and systematic exposition among the great philosophers, yet there is the most complete unanimity, not only with respect to the transcendency of the Speculative, but also with reference to the content of its knowing. If the reader of different systems of Philosophy has in himself achieved some degree of Speculative culture, he will at every step be delighted and confirmed at the agreement of what, to the ordinary reader, seem irreconcilable statements.

Not only do speculative writers agree among themselves as to the nature of things, and the destiny of man and the world, but their results furnish us in the form of pure thought what the artist has wrought out in the form of beauty. Whether one tests architecture, sculpture, painting, music or poetry, it is all the same. Goethe has said:

As all Nature's thousand changes  
But one changeless God proclaim;  
So in Art's wide kingdoms ranges  
One sole meaning, still the same:  
This is Truth, eternal Reason,  
Which from Beauty takes its dress,  
And serene, through time and season,  
Stands for aye in loveliness.

While Art presents this content to the senses, Religion offers it to the conception in the form of a dogma to be held by faith; the deepest Speculative truth is allegorically typified in a historical form, so that it acts upon the mind partly through fancy and partly through the understanding. Thus Religion presents the same content as Art and Philosophy, but stands between them, and forms a kind of middle ground upon which the purification takes place. "It is the purgatory between the inferno of Sense and the Paradise of Reason." Its function is mediation; a continual degrading of the sensuous and external, and elevation to the super-sensuous and internal. The transition of Religion into Speculative Philosophy is found in the mystics. Filled with the pro-

found significance of religious symbolism, and seeing in it the explanation of the universe, they essay to communicate their insights. But the form of Science is not yet attained by them. They express themselves, not in those universal categories that the Spirit of the Race has formed in language for its utterance, but they have recourse to symbols more or less inadequate because ambiguous, and of insufficient universality to stand for the archetypes themselves. Thus "Becoming" is the most pure germinal archetype, and belongs therefore to logic, or the system of pure thought, and it has correspondences on concrete planes, as e.g., *time, motion, life*, etc. Now if one of these concrete terms is used for the pure logical category, we have mysticism. The alchemists, as shown by a genial writer of our day, use the technique of their craft to express the profound mysteries of spirit and its regeneration. The Eleusinian and other mysteries do the like.

While it is one of the most inspiring things connected with Speculative Philosophy to discover that the "Open Secret of the Universe" has been read by so many, and to see, under various expressions, the same meaning; yet it is the highest problem of Speculative Philosophy to seize a method that is adequate to the expression of the "Secret"; for its (the content's) own method of genetic development must be the only adequate one. Hence it is that we can classify philosophic systems by their success in seizing the content which is common to Art and Religion, as well as to Philosophy, in such a manner as to allow its free evolution; to have as little in the method that is merely formal or extraneous to the idea itself. The rigid formalism of Spinoza — though manipulated by a clear speculative spirit — is inadequate to the unfolding of its content; for how could the mathematical method, which is that of quantity or external determinations alone, ever suffice to unfold those first principles which attain to the quantitative only in their result?

In this, the profoundest of subjects, we always find in Plato light for the way. Although he has not given us complete examples, yet he has pointed out the road of the true Speculative method in a way not to be

mistaken. Instead of setting out with first principles presupposed as true, by which all is to be established (as mathematics and such sciences do), he asserts that the first starting points must be removed as inadequate. We begin with the immediate, which is utterly insufficient, and exhibits itself as such. We ascend to a more adequate, by removing the first hypothesis and this process repeats itself until we come to the first principle, which of course bears its own evidence in this, that it is absolutely universal and absolutely determined at the same time; in other words it is the self-determining, the "self-moved," as Plato and Aristotle call it. It is its own other, and hence it is the true infinite, for it is not limited but continued by its other.

From this peculiarity results the difficulty of Speculative Philosophy. The unused mind, accepting with naïveté the first proposition as settled, finds itself brought into confusion when this is contradicted, and condemns the whole procedure. The irony of Socrates, that always begins by positing the ground of his adversary, and reducing it through its own inadequateness to contradict itself, is of this character, and the unsophisticated might say, and do say: "See how illogical is Socrates, for he sets out to establish something, and arrives rather at the destruction of it." The *reductio ad absurdum* is a faint imitation of the same method. It is not sufficient to prove your own system by itself, for each of the opposing systems can do that; but you must show that any and all counter-hypotheses result in your own. God makes the wrath of men to praise Him, and all imperfect things must continually demonstrate the perfect, for the reason that they do not exist by reason of their defects, but through what of truth there is in them, and the imperfection is continually manifesting the *want* of the perfect. "Spirit," says Hegel, "is self-contained being. But matter, which is spirit outside of itself, [turned inside out,] continually manifests this, its inadequacy, through gravity — attraction to a central point beyond each particle. (If it could get at this central point, it would have no extension, and hence would be annihilated.)"

The soul of this method lies in the comprehension of the negative. In that wonderful exposé of the importance of the negative, which Plato gives in the Parmenides and Sophist, we see how justly he appreciated its true place in Philosophic Method. Spinoza's "*omnis determinatio est negatio*" is the most famous of modern statements respecting the negative, and has been very fruitful in results.

One would greatly misunderstand the speculative view of the negative should he take it to mean, as some have done, "that the negative is as essential as the positive." For if they are two independent somewhats over against each other, having equal validity, then all unity of system is absolutely impossible — we can have only the Persian Ahriman and Ormuzd; nay, not even these — for unless there is a primal unity, a "*Zeruane-Akerene*" — the uncreated one, these are impossible as opposites, for there can be no tension from which the strife should proceed.

The Speculative has insight into the constitution of the positive out of the negative. "That which has the form of Being," says Hegel, "is the self-related"; but relation of all kinds is negation, and hence whatever has the form of being and is a positive somewhat, is a self-related negative. Those three stages of culture in knowing, talked of by Plato and Spinoza, may be characterized in a new way by their relation to this concept.

The first stage of consciousness — that of immediate or sensuous knowing — seizes objects by themselves — isolatedly — without their relations: each seems to have validity in and for itself, and to be wholly positive and real. The negative is the mere absence of the real thing; and it utterly ignores it in its scientific activity.

But the second stage traces relations, and finds that things do not exist in immediate independence, but that each is related to others, and it comes to say that "Were a grain of sand to be destroyed, the universe would collapse." It is a necessary consequent to the previous stage, for the reason that so soon as the first stage gets over its childish engrossment with the novelty of variety, and attempts to seize the individual thing, it finds its characteristic marks or

properties. But these consist invariably of relations to other things, and it learns that these properties, without which the thing could have no distinct existence, are the very destruction of its independence, since they are its complications with other things.

In this stage the negative has entered and has full sway. For all that was before firm and fixed, is now seen to be, not through itself, but through others, and hence the being of everything is its negation. For if this stone exists only through its relations to the sun, which is *not* the stone but something else, then the being of this stone is its own negation. But the second stage only reduces all to dependence and finitude, and does not show us how any real, true, or independent being can be found to exist. It holds fast to the stage of mediation alone, just as the first stage held by the *immediate*. But the dialectic of this position forces it over into the third.

If things exist only in their relations, and relations are the negatives of things, then all that appears positive — all being — must rest upon negation. How is this? The negative is essentially a relative, but since it is the only substrate (for all is relative), it can relate only to itself. But self-relation is always identity, and here we have the solution of the previous difficulty. All positive forms, all forms of immediateness or being, all forms of identity, are self-relations, consisting of a negative or relative, relating to itself. But the most wonderful side of this is the fact that since this relation is that of the *negative* it *negates* itself in its very relation, and hence its *identity* is a producing of *non-identity*. Identity and distinction are produced by the self-same process, and thus *self-determination* is the origin of all identity and distinction likewise. This is the speculative standpoint in its completeness. It not only possesses speculative content, but is able to evolve a speculative system likewise. It is not only conscious of the principles, but of their method, and thus all is transparent.

To suppose that this may be made so plain that one shall see it at first sight, would be the height of absurdity. Doubtless far clearer expositions can be made of this than

those found in Plato or Proclus, or even in Fichte and Hegel; but any and every exposition must incur the same difficulty, viz.: The one who masters it must undergo a thorough change in his innermost. The "Palingenesia" of the intellect is as essential as the "regeneration of the heart," and is at bottom the same thing, as the mystics teach us.

But this great difference is obvious superficially: In religious regeneration it seems the yielding up of the self to an alien, though beneficent, power, while in philosophy it seems the complete identification of one's self with it.

He, then, who would ascend into the thought of the best thinkers the world has seen, must spare no pains to elevate his thinking to the plane of pure thought. The completest discipline for this may be found in Hegel's *Logic*. Let one not despair, though he seems to be baffled seventy and seven times; his earnest and vigorous assault is repaid by surprisingly increased strength of mental acumen which he will be assured of, if he tries his powers on lower planes after his attack has failed on the highest thought.

These desultory remarks on the Speculative, may be closed with a few illustrations of what has been said of the negative.

I. Everything must have limits that mark it off from other things, and these limits are its negations, in which it ceases.

II. It must likewise have qualities which distinguish it from others, but these likewise are negatives in the sense that they exclude it from them. Its determining by means of qualities is the making it *not* this and *not* that, but exactly what it is. Thus the affirmation of anything is at the same time the negation of others.

III. Not only is the negative manifest in the above general and abstract form, but its penetration is more specific. Everything has distinctions from others in general, but also from *its* other. *Sweet* is opposed not only to other properties in general, as *white*, *round*, *soft*, etc., but to *its* other, as *sour*. So, too, *white* is opposed to *black*, *soft* to *hard*, *heat* to *cold*, etc., and in general a *positive* thing to a *negative* thing. In this kind of relative, the negative is more essential, for it seems to

constitute the intimate nature of the opposites, so that each is reflected in the other.

IV. More remarkable are the appearances of the negative in nature. The element *fire* is a negative which destroys the form of the combustible. It reduces organic substances to inorganic elements, and is that which negates the organic. Air is another negative element. It acts upon all terrestrial elements; upon water, converting it into invisible vapor; upon metals, reducing them to earths through corrosion — eating up iron to form rust, rotting wood into mould — destructive or negative alike to the mineral and vegetable world, like fire, to which it has a speculative affinity. The grand type of all negatives in nature, such as air, and fire is *Time*, the great devourer, and archetype of all changes and movements in nature. Attraction is another appearance of the negative. It is a manifestation in some body of an essential connection with another which is not it; or rather it is an embodied self-contradiction: "that other (the sun) which is not me (the earth) is my true being." Of course its own being is its own negation, then.

Thus, too, the plant is negative to the inorganic — it assimilates it; the animal is negative to the vegetable world.

As we approach these higher forms of negation, we see the negative acting against itself, and this constitutes a process. The food that life requires, which it negates in the process of digestion, and assimilates, is, in the life process, again negated, eliminated from the organism, and replaced by new elements. A negation is made, and this is again negated. But the higher form of negation appears in the generic; "The species lives and the individual dies." The generic continually transcends the individual — going forth to new individuals and deserting the old — a process of birth and decay, both negative processes. In conscious Spirit both are united in one movement. The generic here enters the individual as pure *ego* — the undetermined possibility of all determinations. Since it is undetermined, it is negative to all special determinations. But this *ego* not only exists as subject, but also as object — a process of self-determination or self-negation. And this negation or particularization continually proceeds from one object to another, and remains conscious under the whole, not dying, as the mere animal does, in the transition from individual to individual. This is the *aperçu* of Immortality.

## THE JOURNAL OF SPECULATIVE PHILOSOPHY

### PREFACE<sup>\*</sup>

IN CONCLUDING the first volume of this Journal, the editor wishes to say a few things regarding its contents, even at the risk of repeating, in some cases, what has already been said. He hopes that his judgment in the selection of articles will be, in the main, approved. In so novel an undertaking it is not to be expected that the proper elevation and range will be found at once. But the editor thinks that he has acquired some valuable experience that will aid him in preparing the second volume.

The reader will notice, upon looking over the table of contents, that about one-third of

the articles relate to Art, and hence recommend themselves more especially to those who seek artistic culture, and wish at the same time to have clear conceptions regarding it.

It is, perhaps, a mistake to select so little that bears on physical science, which is by far the most prominent topic of interest at the present day. In order to provide for this, the editor hopes to print in the next volume detailed criticisms of the "Positive Philosophy," appreciating its advantages and defects of method and system. The "Development theory," the "Correlation of Physical, Vital and Mental Forces," the abstract theories in our textbooks on Natural

<sup>\*</sup> Vol. I, no. 4.



Philosophy, regarding the nature of attraction, centrifugal and centripetal forces, light, heat, electricity, chemical elements, etc., demand the investigation of the speculative thinker. The exposition of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit will furnish pertinent thoughts relating to method.

While the large selection of translations has met with approval from very high sources, yet there has been some disappointment expressed at the lack of original articles. Considerably more than half of the articles have been original entirely, while all the translations are new. The complaint, however, relates more especially to what its authors are pleased to call the un-American character of the contents of the Journal. Here the editor feels like pleading ignorance as an excuse. — In what books is one to find the true "American" type of Speculative Philosophy? Certain very honorable exceptions occur to everyone, but they are not American in a popular sense. We, as a people, buy immense editions of John Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer, Comte, Hamilton, Cousin, and others; one can trace the appropriation and digestion of their thoughts in all the leading articles of our Reviews, Magazines, and books of a thoughtful character. If this is American philosophy, the editor thinks that it may be very much elevated by absorbing and digesting more refined aliment. It is said that of Herbert Spencer's works nearly twenty thousand have been sold in this country, while in England, scarcely the first edition has been bought. This is encouraging for the American thinker: what lofty spiritual culture may not become broadly and firmly rooted here where thoughtful minds are so

numerous? Let this spirit of inquiry once extend to thinkers like Plato and Aristotle, Schelling and Hegel — let these be digested and originally reproduced — and what a phalanx of American thinkers we may have to boast of! For after all it is not "American *thought*" so much as American *thinkers* that we want. To *think*, in the highest sense, is to transcend all *natural limits* — such, for example, as national peculiarities, defects in culture, distinctions in Race, habits, and modes of living — to be *universal*, so that one can dissolve away the external hull and seize the substance itself. The peculiarities stand in the way: — were it not for these, we should find in Greek or German Philosophy just the forms we ourselves need. Our province as *Americans* is to rise to purer forms than have hitherto been attained, and thus speak a "solvent word" of more potency than those already uttered. If this be the goal we aim at, it is evident that we can find no other means so well adapted to rid us of our own idiosyncrasies as the study of the greatest thinkers of all ages and all times. May this journal aid such a consummation!

In conclusion, the editor would heartily thank all who have assisted him in this enterprise, by money and cheering words; he hopes that they will not withdraw in the future their indispensable aid. To others he owes much for kind assistance rendered in preparing articles for the printer. Justice demands that special acknowledgment should be made here of the services of Miss Anna C. Brackett, whose skill in proofreading and subtle appreciation of philosophic thought have rendered her editorial assistance invaluable.

# Josiah Royce

## (1855-1916)

ROYCE was one of the greatest speculative minds that America has produced. He was born in an obscure valley of California, and his college days were spent at the University of California. Mill and Spencer were his intellectual aliment. Later in Germany he came under the profound influences of Kant, the Romantics, Schopenhauer, and Lotze. Acquaintance with Hegel came years afterward. Back in America he took his doctorate at Johns Hopkins University in 1878. Royce then accepted an instructorship in rhetoric and logic at California. In 1882-1883, while William James was abroad, he began his career at Harvard. The following year G. H. Palmer took his sabbatical leave in order to keep Royce at Harvard another year. He remained at Harvard until his death in 1916. In 1885 appeared *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy*, a chapter of which, "The Possibility of Error," is included here. Royce<sup>1</sup> affirms that his later writings never varied in spirit from the view here presented.

### THE POSSIBILITY OF ERROR<sup>2</sup>

IN THE last chapter, we sketched a result that seemed nearly within our reach. An unexpected result this, because it springs from the very heart of skepticism itself. We doubted to the last extremity. We let everything go, and then all of a sudden we seemed to find that we could not lose one priceless treasure, try as we would. Our wildest doubt assumed this, namely, that error is possible. And so our wildest doubt assumed the actual

existence of those conditions that make error possible. *The conditions that determine the logical possibility of error must themselves be absolute truth*, that was the treasure that remained to us amid all our doubts. And how rich that treasure is, we dimly saw in the last discussion. That dim insight we must now try to make clearer. Perhaps our previous discussion has shown us that the effort is worth making.

Yet of one thing the reader shall be warned.

<sup>1</sup> "Preface," *The World and the Individual*. First Series. See Cunningham's discussion of this point in *The Idealistic Argument in Recent British and American Philosophy*, pp. 257 ff.

<sup>2</sup> From *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy*, pp. 385-400, 402-05, 406-12, 420-26, 431-33. Boston: 1885. With permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.

The path that we travel is hereabouts very thorny and stony. It is a path of difficult philosophical investigation. Nobody ought to follow it who does not desire to. We hope that the reader will skip the whole of this chapter unless he wants to find even more of dullness than the rest of this sleepy book has discovered to him. For us, too, the arid way would seem hard, were it not for the precious prize at the end of it.

## I

The story of the following investigation shall first be very briefly told. The author had long sought, especially in the discussions of Kant's *Kritik*, and in the books of the post-Kantians, for help in seeing the ultimate principles that lie at the basis of knowledge. He had found the old and well-known troubles. Experience of itself can give no certainty about general principles. We must therefore, said Kant, bring our own principles with us to experience. We know then of causation, because causation is a fundamental principle of our thought, whereby we set our experience to rights. And so long as we think, we shall think into experience the connection of cause and effect, which otherwise would not be there. But hereupon the questions arose that have so often been asked of Kant and the Kantians. Why just these principles and no others? "That is inexplicable," replies Kant. Very well, then, suppose we give up applying to experience those arbitrary principles of ours. Suppose we choose to stop thinking of experience as causally connected. What then? "But you cannot stop," says Kant. "Your thought, being what it is, must follow this one fashion forever." Nay, we reply, how knowest thou that, Master? Why may not our thought get a new fashion some day? And then what is now a necessary principle, for example, that every event has a cause, would become unnecessary or even nonsensical. Do we then know *a priori* that our *a priori* principles must always remain such? If so, how come we by this new knowledge?

So Kant leaves us still uncertain about any fundamental principles upon which a sure knowledge of the world can be founded.

Let us, then, examine a little deeper. Are there any certain judgments possible at all? If one is skeptical in a thoroughgoing way, as the author tried to be, he is apt to reach, through an effort to revise Kant's view, a position something like the following — a provisional position of course, but one that results from the effort to accept nothing without criticism: "Kant's result is that our judgments about the real world are founded on an union of thought and sense, thought giving the appearance of necessity to our judgment, sense giving the material. The necessity of any judgment amounts then only to what may be summed up in the words: *So the present union of thought and sense makes things appear.* If either thought or sense altered its character, truth would alter. Hence every sincere judgment is indeed true for the moment in which it is made, but not necessarily true for other moments. We only postulate that it is true for other moments." "And so," to continue this view, "it is only by means of postulates that our thought even seems to have any unity from moment to moment. We live in the present. If our thought has other truth or falsity than this, we do not know it. Past and future exist not for this present. They are only postulated. Save as postulated, they have no present meaning."

When he held and expressed this view, the author is free to admit that he was not always clear whether he ought to call it the doctrine of the relativity of truth or not. It might have avoided the absurdities of total relativity by taking form as a doctrine that the present moment's judgment is really true or false, for a real past and future, but that we, being limited to present moments, can never compare our judgments with reality to find whether our judgments are true or false. But although this interpretation is possible, this view often did express itself for the author as the doctrine of the total relativity of truth. The latter doctrine to be sure has no real meaning, but the author used with many others to fancy that it had.

To apply the view to the case of causal relations. "We continually postulate," the author used to point out, "we demand, with-

out being able to prove it, that nature in future shall be uniform." So, carrying out this thought, the author used to say: "In fact future nature is not given to us, just as the past is not given to us. Sense-data and thought unite at every instant afresh to form a new judgment and a new postulate. Only in the present has any judgment evident validity. And our postulate of causal relation is just a way of looking at this world of conceived past and future *data*. Such postulates avoid being absurd efforts to regulate independent facts of sense, because, and only because, we have in experience no complete series of facts of sense at all, only from moment to moment single facts, about which we make single judgments. All the rest we *must* postulate or else do without them." Thus one reaches a skepticism as nearly complete as is possible to anyone with earnest activity of thought in him. From moment to moment one can be sure of each moment. All else is postulate.

From the depths of this imperfectly defined skepticism, which seemed to him provisionally the only view he could adopt, the author escaped only by asking the one question more: "If everything beyond the present is doubtful, then how can even that doubt be possible?" With this question that bare relativity of the present moment is given up. What are the conditions that make doubt logically intelligible? These conditions really transcend the present moment. Plainly doubt implies that the statement doubted may be false. So here we have at least one supposed general truth, namely, "All but the immediate content of the present moment's judgment, being doubtful, we may be in error about it." But *what then is an error?* This becomes at once a problem of exciting interest. Attacking it, the author was led through the wilderness of the following argument.

## II

Yet before we undertake this special examination of the nature of error, the reader must pardon us for adding yet another explanatory word. The difficulty of the whole discussion

will lie in the fact that we shall be studying the possibility of the plainest and most familiar of commonplaces. Common sense hates to do such things, because common sense thinks that the whole matter is sure from the outset. Common sense is willing to ask whether God exists, but unwilling to inquire how it is possible that there can exist an error about anything. But foreseeing that something is to follow from all this, we must beg common sense to be patient. We have not the shadow of doubt ourselves about the possibility of error. That is the steadfast rock on which we build. Our inquiry, ultra-skeptical as it may at moments seem, is into the question: *How is the error possible?* Or, in other words: *What is an error?* Now there can be little doubt that common sense is not ready with any general answer to such a question. Error is a word with many senses. By error we often mean just a statement that arouses our antipathy. Yet we all admit upon reflection, that our antipathy can neither make nor be used to define real error. Adam Smith declares, with common sense on his side, in his *Theory of the Moral Sentiments*,<sup>1</sup> that: "To approve or disapprove of the opinions of others is acknowledged, by everybody, to mean no more than to observe their agreement or disagreement with our own." Yet no one would accept as a definition of error the statement that: *Error is any opinion that I personally do not like.* Error has thus a very puzzling character. For common sense will readily admit that if a statement is erroneous, it must appear erroneous to every "right mind" that is in possession of the facts. Hence the personal taste of one man is not enough to define it. Else there might be as many sorts of error as there are minds. It is only the "right mind" whose personal taste shall decide what is an error in any particular case. But what then is a normal mind? Who is the right-minded judge? There seems to be danger that common sense shall run at this point into an infinite regress. I say: *That opinion is an error.* What do I mean? Do I mean that I do not like that opinion? Nay, I mean more. I mean that *I ought not to like it or to accept it.* Why ought

<sup>1</sup> Part I, sect. 1, chap. III, near the beginning.

I not? *Because the ideally right-minded person would not, seeing the given facts, hold that opinion about them.* But who is the ideally right-minded person? Well, common sense may answer, *It is my ideal person, the right-minded man as I conceive him.* But why is my ideal the true ideal? *Because I like it?* — Nay, *because, to the ideal judge, that kind of mind would seem the ideal.* But who is the ideal judge? And so common sense is driven from point to point, unable to get to anything definite.

So much, then, to show in general that common sense does not know what an error is, and needs more light upon the subject. Let common sense not disturb us, then, in our further search, by the constant and indignant protest that error must somehow exist, and that doubt on that subject is nonsense. Nobody has any doubts on that subject. We ask only *how* error exists and how it can exist.

For the rest, what follows is not any effort to demonstrate in fair and orderly array, from any one principle or axiom, what must be the nature of error, but to use every and any device that may offer itself, general analysis, special example, comparison and contrast of cases — anything that shall lead us to the insight into what an error is and implies. For, at last, immediate insight must decide.

We shall study our problem thus. We shall take either some accepted definition of error, or some special class of cases, and we shall ask: How is error in that case, or in accordance with that definition, possible? Since error plainly is possible in some way, we shall have only to inquire: *What are the logical conditions that make it possible?* We shall take up the ordinary suppositions that common sense seems to make about what here determines the possibility of error. We shall show that these suppositions are inadequate. Then the result will be that, on the ordinary suppositions, error would be impossible. But that result would be absurd, if these were the only possible suppositions. Hence the ordinary suppositions must somehow be supplemented. When, therefore, we seem to say in the following that error is impossible, we shall mean only, impossible

under the ordinary suppositions of common sense. What supplement we need to these suppositions, our argument will show us. In sum we shall find the state of the case to be this: Common sense regards an assertion as true or as false apart from any other assertion or thought, and solely in reference to its own object. For common sense each judgment, as a separate creation, stands out alone, looking at its object, and trying to agree with it. If it succeeds, we have truth. If the judgment fails, we have error. But, as we shall find, this view of common sense is unintelligible. A judgment cannot have an object and fail to agree therewith, unless this judgment is part of an organism of thought. Alone, as a separate fact, a judgment has no intelligible object beyond itself. And therefore the presuppositions of common sense must be supplemented or else abandoned. Either then there is no error, or else judgments are true or false only in reference to a higher inclusive thought, which they presuppose, and which must, in the last analysis, be assumed as Infinite and all-inclusive. This result we shall reach by no mystical insight, by no revelation, nor yet by any mere postulate such as we used in former discussions, but by a simple, dry analysis of the meaning of our own thought.

The most formidable opponent of our argument will be, after all, however, not common sense, but that thought mentioned in the last chapter — the thought that may try to content itself with somewhat plausible jargon, and to say that: *"There is no real difference between truth and error at all, only a kind of opinion or consensus of men about a conventional distinction between what they choose to call truth and what they choose to call error."* This view, as the author has confessed, he once tried to hold. Still this meaningless doctrine of relativity is not the same as the view that contents itself with the postulates before discussed. That view might take, and for the author at one time did take, the possible and intelligible form thus expressible: *"Truth and error, though really distinguishable, are for us distinguished only through our postulates, in so far as relates to past and future time."* Such views, while not denying that there is real

truth, despair of the attainability for us of more than momentary truth. But the doctrine of Total Relativity, this view above expressed, differs from genuine skepticism. It tries to put even skepticism to rest, by declaring the opinion, *that there is error*, to be itself an error. This is not merely a moderate expression of human limitations, but jargon, and therefore formidable, because jargon is always unanswerable. When the famous Cretan declared all statements made by Cretans to be in all cases lies, his declaration was hard to refute, because it was such honest-seeming nonsense. Even so with the statement that declares the very existence of error to be an erroneously believed fancy. No *consensus* of men can make an error erroneous. We can only find or commit an error, not create it. When we commit an error, we say what was an error already. If our skeptical view in previous chapters seemed to regard truth and error as mere objects of our postulates, that was only because, to our skepticism, the real truth, the real error, about any real past and future, seemed beyond our reach, so that we had to content ourselves with postulates. But that real error exists is absolutely indubitable.

This being the case, it is evident that even the most thoroughgoing skepticism is full of assumptions. If I say, "There may be no money in that purse yonder," I assume the existence of the purse yonder in order to make just that particular doubt possible. Of course, however, just that doubt may be rendered meaningless by the discovery of the actual non-existence of that particular purse. If there is no purse yonder, then it is nonsensical either to affirm or to deny that it contains money. And so if the purse of which I speak is an hallucination of mine, then the doubt about whether, as an actually existent purse, it has money in it, is deprived of sense. My real error in that case would lie in supposing the purse itself to exist. If, however, I abandon the first doubt, and go on to doubt the real existence of the purse, I equally assume a room, or some other environment, or at all events the universe, as existent, in order to give sense to my question whether the purse

has any being in this environment or in this universe. But if I go yet further, and doubt whether there is any universe at all outside of my thought, what does my doubt yet mean? If it is to be a doubt with any real sense, it must be a doubt still with an object before it. It seems then to imply an assumed order of being, in which there are at least two elements, my lonely thought about an universe, and an empty environment of this thought, in which there is, in fact, no universe. But this empty environment, whose nature is such that my thought does wrong to suppose it to be an universe, what is that? Surely if the doubt is to have meaning, this idea needs further examination. The absolute skepticism is thus full of assumptions.

The first European thinker who seems to have discussed our present problem was Plato, in a too-much-neglected passage of the *Theaetetus*,<sup>1</sup> where Socrates, replying to the second definition of knowledge given by Theaetetus, namely, *knowledge is True Opinion*, answers that his great difficulty has often been to see how any opinion can possibly be false. The conclusion reached by Plato is no very definite one, but the discussion is deeply suggestive. And we cannot do better here than to pray that the shade of the mighty Greek may deign to save us now in our distress, and to show us the true nature of error.

### III

Logicians are agreed that single ideas, thoughts viewed apart from judgments, are neither true nor false. Only a judgment can be false. And if a reasoning process is said to be false, the real error lies still in an actual or suppressed assertion. A fallacy is a false assertion that a certain conclusion follows from certain premises. Error is therefore generally defined as a judgment that does not agree with its object. In the erroneous judgment, subject and predicate are so combined as, in the object, the corresponding elements are not combined. And thus the judgment comes to be false. Now, in this definition, nothing is doubtful or obscure save the one thing, namely, the *assumed relation between the judgment and its object*. The

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Theaetetus*, p. 187 sqq.

definition assumes as quite clear that a judgment has an object, wherewith it can agree or not agree. And what is meant by the agreement would not be obscure, if we could see what is meant by the object, and by the possession of this object implied in the pronoun *its*. What then is meant by *its object*? The difficulties involved in this phrase begin to appear as soon as you look closer. First then the object of the assertion is as such supposed to be neither the subject nor the predicate thereof. It is external to the judgment. It has a nature of its own. Furthermore, not all judgments have the same object, so that objects are very numerous. But from the infinity of real or of possible objects the judgment somehow picks out its own. Thus then for a judgment to have an object, there must be something about the judgment that shows what one of the external objects that are beyond itself this judgment does pick out as its own. But this something that gives the judgment its object can only be the intention wherewith the judgment is accompanied. A judgment has as object only what it intends to have as object. It has to conform only to that which it wants to conform. But the essence of an intention is the knowledge of what one intends. One can, for instance, intend a deed or any of its consequences only in so far as he foresees them. I cannot be said to intend the accidental or the remote or even the immediate consequences of anything that I do, unless I foresaw that they would follow; and this is true however much the lawyers and the judges may find it practically necessary to hold me responsible for these consequences. Even so we all find it practically useful to regard one of our fellows as in error in case his assertions, as we understand them, seem to us to lead to consequences that we do not approve. But our criticisms of his opinions, just like legal judgments of his acts, are not intended to be exact. Common sense will admit that, unless a man is thinking of the object of which I suppose him to be thinking, he makes no real error by merely failing to agree with the object that I have in mind. If the knights in the fable judge each other to be wrong, that is because each knight takes the other's

shield to be identical with the shield as he himself has it in mind. In fact neither of them is in error, unless his assertion is false for the shield as he intended to make it his object.

So then judgments err only by disagreeing with their intended objects, and they can intend an object only in so far forth as this object is known to the thought that makes the judgment. Such, it would seem, is the consequence of the common-sense view. But in this case a judgment can be in error only if it is knowingly in error. That also, as it seems, follows from the common-sense suppositions. Or, if we will have it in syllogistic form:

Everything intended is something known.  
The object even of an erroneous judgment is intended. . . . The object even of an error is something known.

Or: Only what is known can be erred about. Nor can we yet be content with what common sense will at once reply, namely, that our syllogism uses *known* ambiguously, and that the object of an erroneous judgment is known enough to constitute it the object, and not enough to prevent the error about it. This must no doubt be the fact, but it is not of itself clear; on the contrary, just here is the problem. As common sense conceives the matter, the object of a judgment is not as such the whole outside world of common sense, with all its intimate interdependence of facts, with all its unity in the midst of diversity. On the contrary, the object of any judgment is just that portion of the then conceived world, just that fragment, that aspect, that element of a supposed reality, which is seized upon for the purposes of just this judgment. Only such a momentarily grasped fragment of the truth can possibly be present in any one moment of thought as the object of a single assertion. Now it is hard to say how within this arbitrarily chosen fragment itself there can still be room for the partial knowledge that is sufficient to give to the judgment its object, but insufficient to secure to the judgment its accuracy. If I aim at a mark with my gun, I can fail to hit it, because choosing and hitting a mark are totally distinct acts. But, in the

judgment, choosing and knowing the object seem inseparable. No doubt somehow our difficulty is soluble, but we are here trying first to show that it is a difficulty....

#### IV

We follow our difficulty into another department. Let us attempt a sort of provisional psychological description of a judgment as a state of mind. So regarded, a judgment is simply a fact that occurs in somebody's thought. If we try to describe it as an occurrence, without asking whence it came, we shall perhaps find it in three elements, — elements which are in some fashion described in Ueberweg's well-known definition of a judgment as the "Consciousness about the objective validity of a subjective union of ideas." Our interpretation of them shall be this: The elements are: The *Subject*, with the accompanying shade of curiosity about it; the *Predicate*, with the accompanying sense of its worth in satisfying a part of our curiosity about the subject; and the *Sense of Dependence*, whereby we feel the value of this act to lie, not in itself, but in its agreement with a vaguely felt Beyond, that stands out there as Object.

Now this analysis of the elements of a judgment is no explanation of our difficulties; and in fact for the moment only embarrasses us more. But the nature of the difficulty may come home to us somewhat more clearly if we try to follow the thread of this analysis a little further. Even if it is a very imperfect account, it may serve to lead us up to the true insight that we seek into the nature of error. Let us make the analysis a little more detailed.

In its typical form then, the judgment as a mental state seems to us to begin with a relatively incomplete or unstable or disconnected mass of consciousness, which we have called the Subject, as it first begins to be present to us. This subject-idea is attended by some degree of effort, namely, of attention, whose tendency is to complete this incomplete subject by bringing it into closer connection with more familiar mental life. This more familiar life is represented by the predicate-idea. If the effort is successful, the sub-

ject has new elements united to it, assumes in consciousness a definiteness, a coherency with other states, a familiarity, which it lacked at the outset of the act of judgment; and this coherency it gets through its union with the predicate. All this is accompanied further by what one for short may call a sense of dependence. The judgment feels itself not alone, but looks to a somewhat indefinite object as the model after which the present union of ideas is to be fashioned. And in this way we explain how the judgment is, in those words of Ueberweg's definition, "the consciousness about the objective validity of a subjective union of ideas."

Now as a mere completion of subject-idea through the addition of a predicate-idea, the judgment is simply a mental phenomenon, having interest only to the person that experiences it, and to a psychologist. But as true or as false the judgment must be viewed in respect to the indefinite object of what we have called the sense of dependence, whereby the judgment is accompanied. Seldom in any ordinary judgment does this object become perfectly full and clear; for to make it so would often require many, perhaps an infinite, series of judgments. Yet, for the one judgment, the object, whether full and clear or not, exists as object only in so far forth as the sense of dependence has defined it. And the judgment is true or false only with reference to this undefined object. The intention to agree with the object is contained in the sense of dependence upon the object, and remains for this judgment incomplete, like the object itself. Somewhat vaguely this single act intends to agree with this vague object.

Such being the case, how can the judgment, as thus described, fairly be called false? As mere psychological combination of ideas it is neither true nor false. As accompanied by the sense of dependence upon an object, it would be false if it disagreed with its imperfectly defined object. But, as described, the only object that the judgment has is this imperfectly defined one. With this, in so far as it is for the moment defined, the judgment must needs agree. In so far as it is not defined, it is however not object for this judgment at all, but for some other one. What



the imperfect sense of dependence would further imply if it existed in a complete instead of in an incomplete state, nobody can tell, any more than one can tell what towns would grow up by a given rain-pool, if it were no pool, but a great lake. The object of a single judgment, being what it is, namely, a vaguely defined object, present to this judgment, is just what it is for this judgment, and the judgment seems once for all to be true, in case it is sincere. . . .

## v

[Errors discussed in detail.]

The class of errors that we shall first take seems, to common sense, common enough. It is the class known as errors about our neighbor's states of mind. Let us then, for argument's sake, assume without proof that our neighbors do exist. For we are not here concerned to answer Solipsism, but merely to exemplify the difficulties about the nature of error. If our neighbors did not exist, then the nature of the error that would lie in saying that they do exist would present almost exactly the same difficulties. We prefer, however, to begin with the common-sense assumption about ourselves and our neighbors as separate individuals, and to ask how error can then arise in judging of our neighbors' minds.

In the first place then: Who is my neighbor? Surely, on the assumptions that we all make, and that we made all through the ethical part of our discussion, he is no one of my thoughts, nor is any part of him ever any part of my thought. He is not my object, but, in Professor Clifford's phrase, an "eject," wholly outside of my ideas. He is no "thing in my dream," just as I am not in his dream.

Yet I make judgments about him, and he makes them about me. And when I make judgments about him, I do so by having in my thought some set of my own ideas that, although not himself, do yet, as I say, represent him. A kind of dummy, a symbol, a graven image of my own thought's creation, a phantom of mine, stands there in me as the representative of his mind; and all I say about my neighbor's inner life refers directly to this

representative. The Scottish philosophy has had much to say to the world about what it calls direct or presentative, as opposed to representative, knowledge of objects. But surely the most obstinate Scottish philosopher that ever ate oatmeal cannot hold so tenaciously by his national doctrine as to say that I have, according to common sense, anything but a representative knowledge of my neighbor's thoughts and feelings. That is the only sort of knowledge that common sense will regard as possible to me, if so much as that is possible. But how I can know about this outside being is not now our concern. We notice only that our difficulty about error comes back to us in a new form. For how can I err about my neighbor, since, for this common-sense view, he is not even partly in my thoughts? How can I intend that as the object of my thought which never can be object for me at all?

But not everybody will at once feel the force of this question. We must be more explicit. Let us take the now so familiar suggestion of our great humorist about the six people that take part in every conversation between two persons. If John and Thomas are talking together, then the real John and Thomas, their respective ideas of themselves, and their ideas of each other, are all parties to the conversation. Let us consider four of these persons, namely, the real John, the real Thomas, John as Thomas conceives him, and Thomas as John conceives him. When John judges, of whom does he think? Plainly of that which can be an object to his thoughts, namely, of *his* Thomas. About whom then can he err? About *his* Thomas? No, for he knows him too well. His conception of Thomas is his conception, and what he asserts it to be, that it is for him. About the real Thomas? No, for it should seem, according to common sense, that he has nothing to do with the real Thomas in his thought, since that Thomas never becomes any part of his thought at all. "But," says one, "there must be some fallacy here, since we are sure that John *can* err about the real Thomas." Indeed he can, say we, but ours is not this fallacy. Common sense has made it. Common sense has said: "Thomas never is in

John's thought, and yet John can blunder about Thomas." How shall we unravel the knot?

One way suggests itself. Mayhap we have been too narrow in our definition of *object*. Common sense surely insists that objects are outside of our thought. If, then, I have a judgment, and another being sees both my judgment and some outside object that was not in my thought, and sees how that thought is unlike the object in some critical respect, this being could say that my assertion was an error. So then with John and Thomas. *If Thomas could know John's thoughts about him*, then Thomas could possibly see John's error. That is what is meant by the error in John's thought.

But mere disagreement of a thought with any random object does not make the thought erroneous. The judgment must disagree with *its chosen* object. If John never has Thomas in thought at all, how *can* John choose the real Thomas as his object? If I judge about a penholder that is in this room, and if the next room is in all respects like this, save for a penholder in it, with which my assertion does not agree, who, looking at that penholder in that other room, can say that my judgment is false? For I meant not that penholder when I spoke, but this one. I knew perhaps nothing about that one, had it not in mind, and so could not err about it. Even so, suppose that outside of John there is a real Thomas, similar, as it happens, to John's ideal Thomas, but lacking some thought or affection that John attributes to his ideal Thomas. Does that make John's notion an error? No, for he spoke and could speak only of his ideal Thomas. The real Thomas was the other room, that he knew not of, the other side of the shield, that he never could conceive. His Thomas was his phantom Thomas. This phantom it is that he judges and thinks about, and his thoughts may have their own consistency or inconsistency. But with the real other person they have nothing to do. The real other is not his object, and how can he err about what is not object for him?

Absurd, indeed, some one will reply to us. John and Thomas have to deal with represen-

tative phantoms of each other, to be sure; but that only makes each more apt to err about the real other. And the test that they can err is a very simple one. Suppose a spectator, a third person, to whom John and Thomas were both somehow directly present, so that he as it were included both of them. Then John's judgment of his phantom Thomas would be by this spectator at once compared with the real Thomas, and even so would Thomas's judgment of John be treated. If now John's phantom Thomas agreed with the real Thomas, then John's ideas would be declared in so far truthful; otherwise they would be erroneous. And this explains what is meant by John's power to err about Thomas.

The explanation is fair enough for its own purpose, and we shall need it again before long. But just now we cannot be content with it. For what we want to know is not what the judgment of a third thinker would be in case these two were somehow not independent beings at all, but things in this third being's thought. For we have started out with the supposition of common sense that John and Thomas are not dreams or thoughts of some higher third being, but that they are independent beings by themselves. Our supposition may have to be given up hereafter, but for the present we want to hold fast to it. And so John's judgment, which we had supposed to be about the independently existing Thomas, has now turned out to be only a judgment about John's idea of Thomas. But judgments are false only in case they disagree with their intended objects. What, however, is the object of John's judgment when he thinks about Thomas? Not the real Thomas, who could not possibly be an object in another man's thoughts. John's real object being an ideal Thomas, he cannot, if sincere, and if fully conscious of what he means by Thomas, fail to agree in his statements with his own ideal. In short, on this our original supposition, John and Thomas are independent entities, each of which cannot possibly enter in real person into the thoughts of the other. Each may be somehow represented in the other's thoughts by a phantom, and only this phantom can be intended by the other when he

judges about the first. For unless one talks nonsense, it should seem as if one could mean only what one has in mind.

Thus, like the characters in a certain Bab ballad, real John, real Thomas, the people in this simple tale, are total strangers to each other. You might as well ask a blind man to make true or false judgments about the real effects of certain combinations of colors, as to ask either John or Thomas, defined as common sense defines them, to make any judgments about each other. Common sense will assert that a blind man can learn and repeat verbally correct statements about color, or verbally false statements about color, but, according to the common-sense view, in no case can he err about color-ideas as such, which are never present to him. You will be quite ready to say that a dog can make mistakes about the odors of the numberless tracks on the highway. You will assure us, however, that you cannot make mistakes about them because these odors do not exist for you. According to the common-sense view, a mathematician can make blunders in demonstrating the properties of equations. A Bushman cannot, for he can have no ideas corresponding to equations. But how then can John or Thomas make errors about each other, when neither is more present to the other than is color to the blind man, the odor of the tracks on the highway to the dog's master, or the idea of an equation to a Bushman? Here common sense forsakes us, assuring us that there is such error, but refusing to define it. . . .

#### VII

So much for the problem, both in general and in some particular instances. But now may not the reader insist, after all, that there can be in this wise no errors whatever? Contradictory as it seems, have we not, after all, put our judgments into a position whence escape for us is impossible? If every judgment is thus by its nature bound up in a closed circle of thought, with no outlook, can any one come afterwards and give it an external object? Perhaps, then, there is a way out of our difficulty by frankly saying that our thoughts may be neither truths nor errors

beyond themselves, but just occurrences, with a meaning wholly subjective.

We desire the reader to try to realize this view of total relativity once more in the form in which, with all its inherent absurdities, it now comes back to us for the last time. It says, "Every judgment, *A is B*, in fact does agree and can agree only with its own object, which is present in mind when it is made. With no external object can it agree or fail to agree. It stands alone, with its own object. It has neither truth nor error beyond itself. It fulfills all its intentions, and is true, if it agrees with what was present to it when it was thought. Only in this sense is there any truth or falsity possible for our thought."

But once more, this inviting way out of the difficulty needs only to be tried to reveal its own contradictions. The thought that says, "No judgment is true beyond itself," is that thought true beyond itself or not? If it is true beyond itself, then we have the possibility of other truth than the merely subjective or relative truth. If it is false, then equally we have objective falsity. If it is neither true nor false, then the doctrine of relativity has not been affirmed at all as a truth. One sets up an idea of a world of separate, disorganized thoughts, and then says, "Each of them deals only with its own object, and they have no unity that could make them true or false." But still this world that one thus sets up must be the true world. Else is there no meaning in the doctrine of relativity. Twist as one will, one gets not out of the whirlpool of thought. Error must be real, and yet, as common sense arranges these judgments and their relations to one another, error cannot be real. There is so far no escape.

The perfectly general character of the argument must be understood. One might escape it if it applied to any one class of errors only. Then one would say: "In fact, the class of cases in question may be cases that exclude the possibility of both truth and error." But no, that cannot be urged against us, for our argument applies equally to all possible errors. In short, either no error at all is possible, or else there must be possible an infinite mass of error. For the possibilities of thought

being infinite, either all thought is excluded once for all from the possibility of error, or else to every possible truth there can be opposed an infinite mass of error. All this infinite mass is at stake upon the issue of our investigation. Total relativity, or else an infinite possibility of truth and error; that is the alternative before us. And total relativity of thought involves self-contradiction.

Every way but one has been tried to lead us out of our difficulty. Shall we now give up the whole matter, and say that error plainly exists, but baffles definition? This way may please most people, but the critical philosophy knows of no unanswerable problem affecting the work of thought in itself considered. Here we need only patience and reflection, and we are sure to be some day rewarded. And indeed our solution is not far off, but very nigh us. We have indicated it all along. To explain how one could be in error about his neighbor's thoughts, we suggested the case where John and Thomas should be present to a third thinker whose thought should include them both. We objected to this suggestion that thus the natural presupposition that John and Thomas are separate self-existent beings would be contradicted. But on this natural presupposition neither of these two subjects could become object to the other at all, and error would here be impossible. Suppose then that we drop the natural presupposition, and say that John and Thomas are both actually present to and included in a third and higher thought. To explain the possibility of error about matters of fact seemed hard, because of the natural postulate that time is a pure succession of separate moments, so that the future is now as future non-existent, and so that judgments about the future lack real objects, capable of identification. Let us then drop this natural postulate, and declare time once for all present in all its moments to an universal all-inclusive thought. And to sum up, let us overcome all our difficulties by declaring that all the many Beyonds, which single significant judgments seem vaguely and separately to postulate, are present as fully realized intended objects to the unity of an all-inclusive, absolutely clear, universal

and conscious thought, of which all judgments, true or false, are but fragments, the whole being at once Absolute Truth and Absolute Knowledge. Then all our puzzles will disappear at a stroke, and error will be possible, because any one finite thought, viewed in relation to its own intent, may or may not be seen by this higher thought as successful and adequate in this intent.

How this absolute thought is to be related to individual thoughts, we can in general very simply define. When one says: "This color now before me is red, and to say that it is blue would be to make a blunder," one represents an including consciousness. One includes in one's present thought three distinct elements, and has them present in the unity of a single moment of insight. These elements are, first, the perception of red; secondly, the reflective judgment whose object is this perception, and whose agreement with the object constitutes its own truth; and, thirdly, the erroneous reflection, *This is blue*, which is in the same thought compared with the perception and rejected as error. Now, viewed as separate acts of thought, apart from the unity of an including thought, these three elements would give rise to the same puzzles that we have been considering. It is their presence in a higher and inclusive thought that makes their relations plain. Even so we must conceive the relation of John's thought to the united total of thought that includes him and Thomas. Real John and his phantom Thomas, real Thomas and his phantom John, are all present as elements in the including consciousness, which completes the incomplete intentions of both the individuals, constitutes their true relations, and gives the thought of each about the other whatever of truth or of error it possesses. In short, error becomes possible as one moment or element in a higher truth, that is, in a consciousness that makes the error a part of itself, while recognizing it as error.

So far then we propose this as a possible solution for our puzzles. But now we may insist upon it as the only possible solution. *Either there is no such thing as error, which statement is a flat self-contradiction, or else there is an*

*infinite unity of conscious thought to which is present all possible truth.* For suppose that there is error. Then there must be an infinite mass of error possible. If error is possible at all, then as many errors are possible as you please, since, to every truth, an indefinite mass of error may be opposed. Nor is this mere possibility enough. An error is possible for us when we are able to make a false judgment. But in order that the judgment should be false when made, it must have been false before it was made. An error is possible only when the judgment in which the error is to be expressed always was false. Error, if possible, is then eternally actual. Each error so possible implies a judgment whose intended object is beyond itself, and is also the object of the corresponding true judgment. But two judgments cannot have the same object save as they are both present to one thought. For as separate thoughts they would have separate subjects, predicates, intentions, and objects, even as we have previously seen in detail. So that every error implies a thought that includes it and the corresponding truth in the unity of one thought with the object of both of them. Only as present to an including thought are they either true or false. Thus then we are driven to assume an infinite thought, judging truth and error. But that this infinite thought must also be a rational unity, not a mere aggregate of truths, is evident from the fact that error is possible not only as to objects, but as to the relations of objects, so that all the possible relations of all the objects in space, in time, or in the world of the barely possible, must also be present to the all-including thought. And to know all relations at once is to know them in absolute rational unity, as forming in their wholeness one single thought.

What, then, is an error? An error, we reply, is an incomplete thought, that to a higher thought, which includes it and its intended object, is known as having failed in the purpose that it more or less clearly had, and that is fully realized in this higher thought. And without such higher inclusive thought, an assertion has no external object, and is no error. . . .

## IX

Now that our argument is completed as an investigation, let us review it in another way. We started from the fact of Error. That there is error is indubitable. What is, however, an error? The substance of our whole reasoning about the nature of error amounted to the result that in and of itself alone, no single judgment is or can be an error. Only as actually included in a higher thought, that gives to the first its completed object, and compares it therewith, is the first thought an error. It remains otherwise a mere mental fragment, a torso, a piece of driftwood, neither true nor false, objectless, no complete act of thought at all. But the higher thought must include the opposed truth, to which the error is compared in that higher thought. The higher thought is the whole truth, of which the error is by itself an incomplete fragment.

Now, as we saw with this as a starting-point, there is no stopping-place short of an Infinite Thought. The possibilities of error are infinite. Infinite then must be the inclusive thought. Here is this stick, this brick-bat, this snow-flake: there is an infinite mass of error possible about any one of them, and notice, not merely possible is it, but actual. All the infinite series of blunders that you could make about them not only would be blunders, but in very truth now are blunders, though you personally could never commit them all. You cannot in fact *make* a truth or a falsehood by your thought. You only *find* one. From all eternity that truth was true, that falsehood false. Very well then, that infinite thought must somehow have had all that in it from the beginning. If a man doubts it, let him answer our previous difficulties. Let him show us how he can make an error save through the presence of an actual inclusive thought for which the error always was error and never became such at all. If he can do that, let him try. We should willingly accept the result if he could show it to us. But he cannot. We have rambled over those barren hills already too long. Save for Thought there is no truth, no error. Save for inclusive Thought, there is no truth, no error, in separate thoughts.

Separate thoughts as such cannot then know or have the distinction between their own truth and their own falsity in themselves, and apart from the inclusive thought. There is then nothing of truth or of error to be found in the world of separate thoughts as such. All the thoughts are therefore in the last analysis actually true or false, only for the all-including Thought, the Infinite.

We could have reached the same result had we set out from the problem, *What is Truth?* We chose not to do so because our skepticism had the placid answer ready: "No matter *what* truth is, for very likely there is little or no truth at all to be had. Why trouble one's mind to define what a fairy or a brownie is?" "Very well, then," we said to our skepticism, "if that is thy play, we know a move that thou thinkest not of. We will not ask thee of truth, if thou thinkest there is none. We will ask thee of error, wherein thou revelest." And our skepticism very cheerfully, if somewhat incoherently, answers, that, "if there be little or no truth here below, there is at least any amount of error,

which as skeptics we have all been detecting ever since we first went to school." "We thank thee for that word, oh friend, but now, what is an error?" Blessed be Socrates for that question. Upon that rock philosophy can, if it wants, build we know not yet how much.

It is enough for the moment to sum up the truth that we have found. It is this: "*All reality must be present to the Unity of the Infinite Thought.*" There is no chance of escape. For all reality is reality because true judgments can be made about it. And all reality, for the same reason, can be the object of false judgments. Therefore, since the false and the true judgments are all true or false as present to the infinite thought, along with their objects, no reality can escape. You and I and all of us, all good, all evil, all truth, all falsehood, all things actual and possible, exist as they exist, and are known for what they are, in and to the absolute thought; are therefore all judged as to their real character at this everlasting throne of judgment.

## THE ETERNAL AND THE PRACTICAL<sup>1</sup>

THERE are two general tendencies of opinion which nearly all recent thinkers, whatever be their school, seem disposed to favor. The first of these tendencies is that toward a considerable, although, in different thinkers, a very varying, degree of empiricism. "Radical empiricism," such as that of Professor James, has its defenders in our days. A modified, but still pronounced, empiricism is found in more or less close and organic connection with the teachings of recent idealists, and of various other types of constructive metaphysicians. The second of the contemporary tendencies to which I refer is closely associated with these modern forms of empiricism. It is the tendency toward what has been lately named "pragmatism," the tendency, namely, to characterize and to estimate the

processes of thought in terms of practical categories, and to criticize knowledge in the light of its bearings upon conduct.

I am speaking, so far, not of precisely definable theses, but expressly of tendencies. Whatever may be the rationalistic bias or tradition of any of us, we are all more or less empiricists, and we are so to a degree which was never characteristic of the pre-Kantian rationalists. Whatever may be our interest in theory or in the Absolute, we are all accustomed to lay stress upon practical considerations as having a fundamental, even if not the most fundamental, importance for philosophy; and so in a general, and, as I admit, in a very large and loose sense of the term, we are all alike more or less pragmatists. These, then, are common modern tend-

<sup>1</sup> Read as the Presidential Address at the third annual meeting of the American Philosophical Association, at Princeton, December 30, 1903. Reprinted by permission of the editors of the *Philosophical Review*, 13:113-42 (1904).

encies, which thinkers of the most various schools share. In view of these facts, we have a right to rejoice in the degree to which we have come, despite all our differences, to a certain unity of spirit. On the other hand, even in recognizing this attainment of a certain degree of unity, we have also defined the central problems of modern investigation. They are, first, the problem as to the place which our acknowledged and indispensable empiristic tendencies ought to occupy in the whole context of our philosophical opinions; and, secondly, the problem as to the share which our practical postulates, our ethical undertakings, our doctrine of conduct, ought to have in determining our entire view of the universe.

## I

Empiricism, its worth, its justification, its limitations, its lesson — these together form an old story in controversy. I propose in this address, which the kindness of the Association has called me to prepare, to ask your attention to the other of the two tendencies which I have mentioned. I shall try to discuss some of the general relations between our ideals of conduct and our acknowledgment of truth. I need not pause to set forth, in any detail, the well-known fact that the question thus indicated is in its general form by no means a modern question. Both Stoics and Epicureans made it prominent. Earlier still, in consequence of the methods of Socrates, both Plato and Aristotle gave it a significant place in their theories of truth. In modern thought, again, as I also need not at length describe, this problem is by no means confined to contemporary philosophy. Kant's contrast between the theoretical and the practical reason gave our question central importance for the structure of his own system of doctrine. Fichte's philosophy is a deliberate synthesis of pragmatism with absolutism. Hegel made the question a fundamental one in various places in his *Logic*. In the *Phänomenologie*, the romantic biography of the *Weltgeist*, as Hegel there narrates, the tale has all the principal crises due to the conflicts of the theoretical with the practical reason, while all the triumphs

of the hero of this story consist in reconciliations of pragmatic with theoretical interests. Thus, then, the main problem of pragmatism is no more exclusively modern than is that of theism or of empiricism. The occasional efforts to represent the newer insights upon this topic as wholly due to the influence of the most recent doctrines of evolution, and as wholly replacing certain "pre-evolutionary" tendencies of thought — these efforts, I say, where they exist, result from fondness for overemphasizing the adjective "new" — a fondness from which we all in this day suffer, whether we are philosophers or businessmen, promoters or investors, trustees of universities or humble investigators. There is, indeed, in a sense a new pragmatism; for the thought of today has its own inspirations, and, like any individual tendency in the spiritual world, it is no mere echo of other tendencies or ages. But pragmatism is ancient, is human, has been faced countless times before and will be considered countless times again, so long as men labor for the good, and long for the true. We are here dealing with pervasive tendencies of modern opinion indeed, but not with startling new discoveries — with questions of today, but with ancient issues also — with problems which modern democracy may emphasize, but which old religions and social orders already made familiar to the wise men of yore.

For this very reason, however, now that I attempt to discuss some aspects of our problem in the light of contemporary interests, it seems to me advisable not to limit my discussion by attempting to keep within the bounds of a direct polemic against such recent expressions of opinion upon the subject as I do not altogether accept. There are several very notable volumes that have been, of late years, devoted to making explicit certain forms of pragmatism. Professor James's inspiring *Will to Believe*, the recent Chicago *Studies in Logical Theory*, by the members of Professor Dewey's vigorous and productive school, Mr. F. C. S. Schiller's essays published under the title *Humanism* — these are books of the day, all well known very probably, to every one of you. It would be a tempting task to try to review some one or



perhaps all of them. But, as I have said, while the books and the persons are indeed new and unique, the issues are old. I am deeply interested in the persons; but I have time in this paper only for some few of the main issues. While I shall freely refer in general to the current literature of pragmatism, my main argument is one that would remain valid even if the issues of pragmatism were to come to our notice as ancient questions, and not as incidents of the literature of our times. While, then, I shall indeed refer now and then to this literature, I shall not try to treat it in any explicit way. Polemic, whenever it refers to any one author, must rest upon exposition; exposition requires more time than this occasion allows me, raises questions of an exegetical character, and usually dissatisfies the author whom you expound, unless in the end you agree with him in opinion. As Wundt once remarked during a literary controversy: "We are all most erudite with respect to our own books" (*"Sind wir doch alle in unseren eigenen Büchern am besten bewandert"*). I constantly try to become more or less erudite regarding the contents of other men's books; but this is no place to trouble you with an attempt to display such erudition, or to force my colleagues to point out how ill I may have succeeded in understanding them.

I propose, then, to try to state the relation of the doctrine of conduct to the theory of truth as if the question were not especially characteristic of today. I propose to treat it rather as a question of what I shall call eternal importance. This question is: How far is our knowledge identical with an expression of our practical needs?

Nevertheless, I may still permit myself to make one merely personal confession before I go on to my main task — a confession which relates, indeed, to a totally ephemeral matter. Being, as I just said, more erudite than are the rest of you regarding my own writings, I may venture to tell you that once in my life, before I fell a prey to that bondage of absolutism wherein now I languish, there was a time when I was not a constructive idealist of any sort, and when, if I understand the meaning of the central contention of

pragmatism, I was meanwhile a very pure pragmatist. Accordingly, I published in the year 1881, in connection with the Kant centennial celebration of that year, an essay entitled "Kant's Relation to Modern Philosophical Progress." I was then twenty-six years old and had been deeply influenced by Professor James's earlier lectures and essays. My paper was printed in Doctor Harris's *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*. Nobody amongst you is likely to have remembered, even if he has ever read, that paper. It was a mere sketch. But since it expressed a sincere effort to state the theory of truth wholly in terms of an interpretation of our judgments as present acknowledgments, since it made these judgments the embodiments of conscious attitudes that I then conceived to be essentially ethical, and to be capable of no restatement in terms of any absolute warrant whatever, I may assert that, for a time at least, I did seriously struggle not only to be what is now called a pragmatist, but also to escape falling into the clutches of any Absolute. When later, however, I fell, and came to believe, as I now steadfastly do, that it is one function of the truth to be, amongst other things, actually true, I do not think that I ceased to be, in a very genuine sense, still a pragmatist, although no longer possessed, perhaps, of what Hegel would have called the pure agility which I then used most earnestly to cultivate. I still am of the opinion that judging is an activity guided by essentially ethical motives. I still hold that, for any truth-seeker, the object of his belief is also the object of his will to believe. I still contend that the truth cannot possibly be conceived as a merely external object, which we passively accept, and by which we are merely moulded. I still maintain that every intelligent soul, however confused or weak, recognizes no truth except the truth to whose making and to whose constitution it even now contributes — no truth except that which genuinely embodies its own present purpose. I earnestly insist that knowledge is action, although knowledge is also never *mere* action. I fully accept the position that the judgment which I now make is a present reaction to a present empirically given situa-



tion, a reaction expressing my need to get control over the situation, whatever else my judgment may also express. I fully accept the position that the world of truth is not now a finished world and is now in the act of making. All this I accept, even although I may nevertheless appear to be bound, by reason of my other convictions, fast in the chains of absolutism. All this I daily teach, even while, as a fact, my only final hope, as a seeker of truth and as a human being, is in the eternal.

At all events, however, now that I can say all this, perhaps it will not seem to you as if, when I undertake to discuss the relations of the principles of conduct to the theory of truth, I shall be doing so without any comprehension of the meaning and the human interest of pragmatism. As I said at the outset, we are totally, all of us, more or less pragmatists. The question is solely one regarding the due place of that side of our doctrine in the whole organism of our convictions.

## II

Without expressly expounding or criticizing the opinions of anybody else, although of course without attempting to be original, let me first try to state a doctrine that, according to my conception of the matter, emphasizes, as fully as I am able to emphasize, the motives upon which I suppose pragmatism to rest. Then let me try to explain why I believe that this view of the nature of the knowing process must be, not merely set aside (for within its limits it is, as I conceive, a partial statement of the truth), but supplemented, so that it may be aided to state the whole truth.

To begin, then, the exposition of what I take to be the spirit of pragmatism — thinking, judging, reasoning, believing — these are all of them essentially practical activities. One cannot sunder will and intellect. A man thinks about what interests him. He thinks because he feels a need to think. His thinking may or may not be closely linked to those more worldly activities which common sense loves to call practical. But the most remote speculations are, for the man who

engages in them, modes of conduct. As contrasted with other men, the thinker, so far as his thoughts do not directly link themselves to the motor processes usually called practical, appears, when viewed from without, to be an inactive person. An anecdote records how a servant woman in Darwin's household ventured to suggest that the old gentleman must be so delicate as he was in health because, as she said, he lacked occupation, and only wandered about looking at his plants, or sat poring over his papers. Whether the anecdote is true or not, the thinker often seems to casual observers to be inhibited, held back from action, hopelessly ineffective. But this appearance we know to be but a seeming. The thinker plans motor processes, and in the end, or even constantly while he thinks, these processes get carried out. The thinker makes diagrams, arranges material objects in classes and in orderly series, constructs apparatus, adjusts with exquisite care his delicate instruments of precision; or he takes notes, builds up formulas, constructs systems of spoken or written words to express his thoughts; and ultimately, in expressing his thoughts, he may direct the conduct of vast numbers of other men, just as Darwin came to do. Meanwhile, even if viewed from within, from his own conscious point of view, the thinker's ideas are not mere objects of contemplation upon which he passively gazes. They are known to him as his own deeds, or at least as his plans of action, whose presence to his mind is determined by a series of acts of attention — of acts, too, which are inseparably associated with tendencies to use words or other symbols, to arrange external objects in orderly series, to handle his instruments, to control the material objects which concern him, and inwardly to affirm and to deny. And even affirmation and denial have typical outward expressions in conduct. A thought which has no conscious reference to a deed, which involves no plan of conduct, which joins nothing together that was so far divided, which dissects nothing that was so far whole, which involves no play of active attention from object to object, which voluntarily asserts nothing, and which denies nothing, which neither accepts nor rejects,

but only passively contemplates, is no thought at all, but is a vacant staring at nothing in particular by nobody who is self-conscious. Thought, indeed, often involves a temporary suppression of outer conduct, for the sake of considering plans of conduct. But plans of conduct, so far as they are not yet outwardly expressed, are known to our inner consciousness only when possible deeds are begun, but are more or less completely suppressed as soon as they are fairly initiated — and the passage to the outward expression of thought is not due to the appearance of a new sort of consciousness, which alone is to be called volitional, and which, as volitional, is to be distinguished from every intellectual process. No, the transition from thought to externally significant conduct is rather due to the removal of certain inhibitions. These inhibitions, so long as they persist, keep the thinker from letting those activities which he inwardly rehearses go free in the form of outwardly manifest words, of arrangements of external objects, and of expressive bodily attitudes such as are those of affirmation and denial.

For the rest, you have only to observe the motor activities of any vivacious disputant or lecturer who freely expresses his thought, to observe how intensely practical are the attitudes in which even decidedly abstract thinking processes inevitably display themselves, so soon as such inhibitions are actually removed. The vivacious disputant or expounder points out imaginary objects with his extended forefinger, and imitates their contour, their movement, their arrangement, their inner structure, by an elaborate display of gestures. His pointings are indices of his subjects; his mimicry portrays his predicates. He affirms by pounding with clenched fist against the palm of his other hand, or upon his desk. Or, again, in case of his more abstract and less contentious assertions, he perhaps gently lays his forefinger across the palm of the opposing hand, or lays it upon the forefinger of this hand, thereby quietly, but impressively, showing you how he has learned to lay his finger upon the very truth itself. He denies by means of gestures of avoidance, of aversion, or of destruction. He

harmlessly, yet in a spiritual sense seriously, threatens you, his opponent, with frown, with glittering eye, with shaking fist, with attitudes of defiance, or of crushing intellectual hostility. He invites you, if you are nearer to him in opinion, by winning gestures to come to his embrace. If the controversy is vigorous, then as he affirms or denies, he clenches his jaws and shows his teeth. Or in scorn perhaps at your errors, he makes the well-known but less marked facial gesture that Darwin describes as the act of slightly uncovering the canine tooth on the side towards the enemy. If he becomes very calm, pursuing in his thought extremely abstract and elusive truths, his eye, or his pointing hand, begins to search out small or distant objects. I know a distinguished public lecturer who, whenever his topics grow problematic, follows cautiously with his eyes the lines where the wall and ceiling of the room meet, then perhaps lets them run down the corner of the room, where the two walls meet, and then calmly announces in words the result of his quest. I remember an aged and optimistic philosopher, now dead, whose every expository period was wont to begin with the suggestion of a problem, but to end with its often highly abstract, yet always triumphant solution. His thoughtful and extremely mobile countenance was a mass of wrinkles, which time and the defense of the truth had worn. As each new sentence set out upon its lengthy course, and as the problem grew intense, this venerable thinker's facial wrinkles used to twist into a marvelous and often terrifying lack of symmetry. One wondered whether those tangled curves could ever again acquire a restful aspect. But as the end of the sentence approached, they always, at the fitting moment, triumphantly passed back again into a beautiful symmetry, and through this blessed relief of tension the evenness of the truth was at the close made quite manifest to everybody present. I do not indeed well remember what this philosopher's opinions were, so busy was I wont to become in watching his countenance. But I gathered that his optimism was a sort of inner comment of his consciousness upon his ceaseless joy in discovering how every mus-

cular strain, whereby his facial wrinkles could possibly be complicated, was certain in the end to pass over into symmetry and quiescence. As he had for many years carefully experimented upon this topic, and as no twist of his wrinkles had ever yet failed to yield to this mode of treatment, he seemed to feel very sure about the universe. The subjects of his assertions might be as contorted as fortune chanced to make them; his predicates were sure to consist of symmetrical curves of relief, and so of peace. Such, you see, was the pragmatism of this venerable sage.

What such seemingly trivial facts illustrate holds true, in principle, of at least one aspect of the inner life of all of us. Our thinking is indeed from moment to moment a consciousness of our adjustment to our present experience. This adjustment is our own act. We perform this act, not capriciously, but because we find therein our conscious relief, our movement in the direction of the fulfillment of our own purpose. Unless I am interested in expressing myself, in actively reading my own purpose into my world, you shall not induce me, by any device, to know or to express any truth whatever about what is not myself.

### III

These, then, are considerations which suggest an attempt, not only to define our thoughtful consciousness in essentially practical terms, but also to define the objects about which we think, yes, the very reality of which we are conscious, in similarly pragmatic fashion. For, in the first place, although objects of experience seem, from a well-known realistic point of view, to be given to us whole, with all their properties and relations, as objects independent of our will, and so as objects in their essence extraneous to our consciousness — still an equally well-known critical method of reflection, when linked with the pragmatism whose basis we have now expounded, tends to destroy this realistic seeming. For what is directly given to us at any moment (that is, what is immediately and *merely* given to us) is simply the fact of our special momentary

need for further insight and for further action. What at any moment we actually see, what we clearly think, what we make out of the given, that is not merely given to us, but is also *ours* — not ours as our mere caprice, independent of the given need, but ours as what Professor Dewey rightly calls our response to the situation, our furnishing of the needed predicates, our recognition of the object, our adjustment of deed to present want, in brief, as I should say, our expression of ourselves under the conditions.

Hence it is not true that we merely find outer objects as independent of our will, and as nevertheless possessed in all their independence of their various predicates, qualitative, relational, substantial, individual. We find them possessed of characters, only in so far as we ourselves co-operate in the construction, in the definition, in the linkage of these very predicates, which we then ascribe to the objects. Since, to be sure, our need of thus defining our objects is indeed given to us, as this brute fact of our momentary need itself, as the bare datum that we must indeed act in order to succeed, and since, in case we are said to come to an understanding of our objects, we succeed in dealing with our need by virtue of just these special acts of ours, that is, by virtue of making these assertions, of ascribing these predicates, of living out just these beliefs — since, I say, all this is true, we are accustomed to say that it is the object itself whose nature forces upon us just these predicates. For, in order to relieve our need, we are indeed constrained, in general, to define our object thus and thus. But, as a fact, nothing can force you except your own need. If you have no interest in the object, its supposed independence of your will can impose upon your will no recognition of this its barely external nature. You observe what you need to observe; and in observing you partly fulfill your purpose by diminishing your need; and what you find, as you thoughtfully review your observations, is the expression of your own thoughtful nature in the object — an expression always conditioned by your need, but also always conditioned by your devices as a thinker, by your categories, by your modes of activity.

For instance, does your observed object, as you dwell upon it, come to be possessed for your consciousness of definite numerical complexity? Then that is because you have needed to count, and, counting, have not merely found, but have constructed, both your numerical predicate and the relation of one to one correspondence between the constituents of your predicate and the attentively seized constituents that you now indeed find in your object, but find only in so far as your need has let you, dwelling upon these elements, to divide by your attention what sense furnishes to you only in that problematic confusion which constituted your very need of counting. Thus counting is an expression of your purposes; and sense, when uncounted, shows you no definitely numerical groups; but, at best, furnishes the stimulus and the support of the need to count. This case is typical.

What holds of numerical complexity, holds of every intelligible aspect of experience. What you find, then, as barely given in your experience, are needs that can be thus or thus met, tensions that can be thus or thus relieved by the response of your intelligence, and objects that possess a meaning, only in case you behold in these objects the expression of your own work in meeting your needs. As Kant said, you can get nothing defined and intelligible out of your object except what you have put into it. Yes, as Kant might have said, you get nothing defined and intelligible out of your object except when you merely reflect upon what even now you are putting into it, by active responses to stimuli, that is, to needs — responses which tell you what your object is only by letting you see what just now you must do about your object. To be sure, since your need at every point accompanies, and so moulds your deed, you never feel free to think this or that of your presented object. For you are bound fast by your own need. The object is therefore yours to construct, but not yours to create; and this again is what Kant said. And this is the aspect of the object which realism falsely emphasizes. My need is the controller of my will; though even my need, although given, is not given as an object

independent of my will. When realism asserts that, independently of me, my object is possessed of the characters that my intelligence is forced to find in it, the truth of the realistic assertion, as it is usually formulated, seems to lie mainly in the validity of the social judgment that anybody, possessed merely of my needs and of my present resources, would perforce define his world just as I now do mine. This social judgment is human; but it is itself only the expression of one of our deepest needs, namely, the need of companionship, the need to acknowledge the presence of our fellows and to sympathize with their needs. Apart from this social basis of realism, the ordinary realistic interpretation of experience would turn upon the most barren of fancies. The object is never merely given to me, but is given only as the result of a process. It is that which, through my own construction, I find as the momentary expression of my own effort to satisfy my needs. Now sunder that which I thus find from that constructive life whose expression it is. Say that not only before I needed, but before anybody needed, and quite independently of my need, or of any need, there was and is that which my need led me to find as my construction. To say this is realism. And this is what I call a barren fancy, because when one looks closer, one finds that to say this becomes needless.

Over against such realism, the pragmatism that we are now defining rightly insists, I think, that what you find in experience is what it is found to be, namely, an object in so far as it is characterized through and in your thoughtful deeds.

#### IV

So far we have, then, the statement of the foundations upon which rests, if I rightly understand the matter, what I shall call pure pragmatism. This pure pragmatism, as we shall soon see, is held unmodified by nobody. Yet there exist those who often speak as if this were their whole doctrine of knowledge. Let us, then, for the moment, take this doctrine as it stands, and try to be for a moment pure pragmatists. If what we have just stated shows the nature of our thought and

of its objects, what room is there left for any form of absolutism? This fluent realm of transient meanings, where whatever is merely found, as brute datum, is nothing more than a query, a problem, a need, while whatever is both found and characterized, that is, whatever is experienced as a whole, intelligible, present object, is inevitably an at least partial fulfillment of a present need — well, to what universal laws of thought or being can such a realm conform? Can such a realm be the expression of any truth that is either eternal, or absolutely authoritative? You have your needs, I mine. We both change our needs. What youth hopes is not what age demands. The morning and the evening bring different needs. Let us be pluralists. If, like my venerable friend, any one of us is in need of such objects as, when conceived, give his facial wrinkles symmetry, and his soul peace, and if, by chance, he can uniformly get what he needs — well, what he gets is his truth. Who amongst us has any better truth? Who wants anything but a prevailing triumphant state of mind? If thinking gives us such a state, we call our thoughts true. Has the word "truth" any universal meaning whatever except this? When I say: "This belief of mine is true," what can I mean but: "This belief of mine just now meets my conscious needs"?

As soon as we raise this question, we all indeed begin, even as pure pragmatists, to observe just a little uncomfortably, one need which we have indeed already mentioned, but which we have not yet explicitly defined. It is the need that I before called the need of companionship, the need not only of thinking for ourselves, but of finding somebody who either will agree with us, or else at least, to our mode of thinking, *ought* to agree with us. This need also is a human, and so far, in our account, is an empirical fact, a brute datum, like our other needs. Perhaps it has no deeper meaning than has any rival need of our wavering wits. But, at all events, it is a need that goes along with his other interests to make the philosopher. For a philosopher, however much he may love to speak with tongues, becomes uncomfortable if he chances to observe that he seems to be edifying only

himself and not the brethren. My venerable friend aforesaid obviously desired that we who listened to him should all somehow learn to wrinkle our faces just as he did and just when he did, and should so attain the same blessedness as that which he enjoyed. I notice a human weakness of a similar sort even in the most stubborn pluralists — even in those who come nearest to being pure pragmatists. I find, namely, that a pluralist, when he criticizes me, always wants me to come into unity with him. And I notice that this weakness also shows itself in a very marked and, as I think, partially justified disposition to expound pragmatism in forms which are not altogether pure. There are those who often speak as if they were pure pragmatists. Yet their doctrine has always another side; and the existence of such additions as are often made to doctrines that at first seem to be pure pragmatism shows, I judge, that there is some difficulty involved in leaving the problem of knowledge just where our previous exposition has so far left it. Something is still lacking to complete our picture of what we call truth. For consider: You shall open some accounts of modern pragmatism which, to judge by some of the expressions used, seem to be attempts at pure pragmatism. Yet, as you read further, you shall learn that philosophers ought to take especially careful account of that greatest of modern discoveries — the doctrine of evolution. Everything is a product of evolution. Must not thought be such a product? Obviously it must. But now, as you further learn from such expounders of pragmatism, one great merit and recommendation of such pragmatism as I have just tried to illustrate is that it shows how, not only thought, in general, but the special categories of thought, categories such as truth, objectivity, reality, are all products of evolution, and of a process of evolution which is determined by need, by stimulation, by the environment, by the growth of our organisms. What we believe thus appears as a result, like our other reactions — like firemaking, like engine-building, like money-getting, like art, like the family, or like eating and football playing — a result brought about

by the character of our organisms, by the environment that plays upon us, by the desires that burn within us. Thought and its inner products show you, much as these other incidents of evolution do, reality in the making. The processes of thinking, the acknowledgment of these and these objects as real, of these and these principles as true, the toils of science, the warfare of the creeds, the speculations of the philosophers — these are all like the cat's pursuit of the mouse, or like the kitten's flight after its tail, simply forms of adjustment to the environment. It is, then, a great recommendation of pragmatism that it comes into line with natural history, that it drops the methods which were common in "pre-evolutionary" ages of thought, and that it conceives truth, being, logic, and all the rest of the objects of philosophical reflection, as, like eating and living, mere incidents of that well-known universal process of evolution. You accept evolution. Well, then, pragmatism is a corollary of evolution. Thus are philosophy and science to be reconciled. Now all these observations about the relations between pragmatism and the doctrine of evolution may have their great value in another context. I am now doubting their intrinsic interest. What I inevitably note is, however, that when a man talks in such terms, he seems to me not to be any longer expounding a pure pragmatism. I do not blame him for this. But I do wonder that he will often speak as if he meant to be a pure pragmatist.

The evidence for pure pragmatism, if there is such evidence, must rest on what you now can observe as to your present thought and its objects. The evidence for the doctrine of evolution must rest upon beliefs that relate to vast numbers of objects such as are supposed somehow to have existed long before you or I or any human being could have been there to acknowledge their existence. Tell me first that you are a pure pragmatist, and that you accordingly believe whatever you just now find it needful for you to believe; and I can, up to a certain point, understand you. Then add that, having read modern books, or having worked in the field, or in laboratories, you just now find it needful to

believe in something called evolution, and accordingly to believe in a world that existed before all human beings existed, to believe also in an object called an organism, in an object called an environment, and in various other such conceived objects, and still I follow you. But tell me that you are a pragmatist *because* pragmatism logically follows from the truth of this doctrine of evolution, and then indeed I fail to see what you mean. For when you say: "The doctrine of evolution is true," I ask you: "In what sense true?" If you reply: "True in the pragmatist's sense, viz., as the object of my present conscious and constructive thought, which conceives evolution as a truth, because just now I need so to conceive it"; — well, then you state your pragmatism first, and define your belief in evolution solely in terms of your pragmatism. How, then, can this belief in evolution — a belief which is a mere instance of your pragmatism — lend back any of its borrowed authority to furnish a warrant for your belief in the very doctrine called pragmatism, a belief which you presuppose in expressing your evolutionary creed?

But, on the other hand, if you say: "The doctrine of evolution, as a universally valid result of modern science, is to be accepted, not in the pragmatist's sense at all, but because this doctrine, whether we happen to need to believe it or not, is true"; well — then you have once for all either abandoned, or else have profoundly modified, your pragmatism. You have, perhaps, become a realist, or maybe an absolutist. In any case, your belief in evolution can then furnish no warrant for your pragmatism; because in that case you have denied pragmatism in order to define the sort of truth that you attribute to the doctrine of evolution.

Why, then, does a pragmatist, who often speaks as if he meant to be a pure pragmatist, nevertheless boast of his fidelity to the doctrine of evolution? Because, I answer, despite his occasional speech as if he meant pure pragmatism, he is not a pure pragmatist. For all his pragmatism, he does not quite like to confess that he is an evolutionist *merely* because he just now feels the personal need of

being an evolutionist, precisely as other people may feel their need of being Mormons, or of believing in witchcraft, or of squaring the circle in some particular way. And, as a fact, he is not an evolutionist in the sense of such pure pragmatism. He is an evolutionist in the sense of supposing not only that he does just now need to believe in the doctrine of evolution, but that he *ought* to need so to believe. And he strengthens in himself this sense of the ought by reflecting that he lives in an evolutionary age, and that the experts have settled the question in favor of evolution, and that, by appealing to this well-known presupposition, he can get hearers for his doctrine of pragmatism. For a pragmatist, I repeat, is a companionable person; and, moreover, he rightly thinks that he ought to be so. He is not content to see for himself that his opinions have merely the pragmatic sanction; he wants us to agree with him about this very matter. In fact, he needs that we shall find ourselves needing what he needs.

Two motives that tend to modify pure pragmatism appear even in this brief sketch of its complications. Even a pragmatist who wants to be a pure one has an inevitable conception, not only of what he now needs, as he utters this judgment, but of what he ought to need in order to get a warrant for the judgment. And he also has a conception of the need of finding companions who shall be persuaded to agree with him, or who at least ought to be persuaded. Pure pragmatism would be, after all, a lonesome kind of doctrine. I need, and need just now, to assert myself thus. Hence, I judge thus. Hence this is true for me. How obvious all that is! Yes, but how barren, unless I can add: "My need is the human one; it defines a ruling, a standard need. I *ought* to need just this assertion of just this object in view of this situation. I ought; you ought; humanity ought, to characterize this object thus." Only when I can speak thus do I feel at home. Hence a natural fondness of the pragmatist for using terms that suggest appeal to current popular opinion. Evolution is today not only a result of science; it is a catchword, a name for a celebrated "merger" of all sorts of securities. If you only join the words "social"

and "evolution" in your speech nowadays, everybody at once listens to find out what you have to say. Hence, if you want really to feel at home with even your innermost reflective doctrine, you must characterize it as having an important bearing on the structure of society; and you must show it to be a corollary of the doctrine of evolution. Then only are you quite sure of it!

But, then in what sense do these perfectly normal and natural tendencies inevitably modify your pure pragmatism? I reply, on one side, they illustrate the pragmatist's main thesis; on the other side, they indeed do modify it. They illustrate it; for this tendency to define pragmatism in terms of evolution is itself the expression of an inner need of the pragmatist who makes the evolutionary appeal. This fondness for companionship, which shows itself in a tendency to confirm pragmatism by a use of popular catchwords, notwithstanding the obvious fact that the only logical basis for pragmatism, apart from purely expository illustrations, must be a purely individual and interior reflective process, whereby we notice what happens when we judge — this fondness for social confirmation, I say, is again the expression of one of the needs of the pragmatist thinker, who all the while teaches that truth, for him, is merely the result of his need for control over his own experience.

Yet if these tendencies, on the one hand, illustrate pure pragmatism, on the other hand, they, with equal obviousness, modify the form that it assumes in the consciousness of the pragmatist himself. He needs — but *what* he needs is to recognize that his truth is something *more* than the result and expression of his present need. He judges of his objects as he needs to judge; but one of his needs is to be satisfied that his need ought to be what it is. He expresses himself as he just now is; but he aims to express himself so that his fellow may also be one with himself. Inevitably, therefore, the very need of the moment needs control by another than itself, yet by somewhat that is not alien to itself. It needs control; for so soon as it recognizes that it is logically no better than any other possible will to believe, as for instance, no



better than a will to believe in witchcraft, or in fairyland, it recognizes its own emptiness. It needs, therefore, control by some other than itself; for a valid principle that should determine what, under given conditions, is the right and rational need, is not identical with the passing content of any merely momentary need. But when the need of the moment thus needs to be controlled, the control that it seeks is not that of a realistic object, independent of itself, but that of some universal expression of need — an expression that simply makes conscious what the need of the moment is trying, after all, to be, namely, a rational and binding need. Hence, at the moment of expressing one's pragmatism, one loves to appeal to well-recognized objective truths — to evolution, to common sense, to whatever is likely to seem universally valid.

## v

We have thus prepared the way to state wherein our first statement of pragmatism has to be modified, even in order that its own need should be expressed.

"I believe what now, with my conditions, and my needs, my judging activity constructs as the present truth for me": there is one form of the assertion of pure pragmatism. All this, we have said, is obvious and barren. Why barren? Because one of the things that I seek, when I judge, is to express something that shall have some value as a standard. A judgment is not only a construction, but a resolve; not only a response, but a precept, addressed possibly to other men, to myself at other times, to whatever reasonable being there may be who has wit to understand me. It not only says: "I believe"; it says: "This is to be believed." The one who judges wills not only his own state of mind, but other states of mind, which he conceives to be constructed in accordance with the rule laid down in his judgment. Unless he does this, he does not judge; he merely croons, or wrinkles his face, or plays with his mental images. Whoever judges is a pragmatist; but, as we have already seen, he means to require you to believe him. And therein he becomes more than a pragmatist.

And so, in case you first judge, and then as a pure pragmatist observe that your judgment is merely your present reaction to this present conscious situation, the very observation, if it is sufficient to your mind to characterize your whole process of judging, at once takes the whole life out of what was but just now your assurance. That is precisely what I do not want my present judgment to be, namely, this momentary feat of attentive agility. I want it to have authority. Suppose that I assert something, and that thereupon my critical neighbor pityingly says: "Yes, no doubt *you* think so." Why may this retort seem insulting? Because it pretends to reduce my judgment to a mere attitude of my own. Now that is just what I do not want my opinion to be. But suppose that just this retort is the *only* one that I am able upon reflection to make to myself. Well, then indeed I am a pure pragmatist. But hereupon my judgments lose all their deepest interest. They do not meet the principal need that they all the while believed themselves to be meeting. It is as when one wakes from a dream-conversation and finds himself talking alone in the darkness. He was but just now responding to the situation according to his insight. He hereupon observes that both situation and response were merely his own momentary datum and construction. How lonesome is this new insight! Now pragmatists, indeed do not usually feel lonesome. They are excellent companions and very fond of rational society. We have seen why they do not feel lonesome. It is because, like others, they take their judgments about evolution, society, humanity, the good, and the like, to be possessed of a character that no pure pragmatism could express. Having first believed these judgments in the ordinary way, namely, as having an authority which is not of the moment, they then add to all these insights that of their pragmatism; and their pragmatism now seems to them an interesting addition to the rest of their natural history. And so at moments they can speak as if this were a pure pragmatism. This, however, they never really mean.

"But," you may object, "in answering thus the contention of the pure pragmatist,



one only illustrates the more, as has already been admitted, the pure pragmatist's own position. For this need to give our judgments authority, this longing not to be merely expressing ourselves as now we are, but to be laying down a rule for ourselves at other times, and for other selves, what is this but one of our present and conscious needs? Do we get authority by merely willing to have it? Do we legislate for other individuals merely by longing to legislate? What have we, after all, when we judge, but the resolve to speak for others than ourselves? Is the resolve the accomplishment, except precisely in so far as it accomplishes itself in just the present judgment?"

You see the point that we have reached in following our problem. The situation is indeed baffling. If the pure pragmatist speaks to us, and so speaking asserts himself, he speaks as one having authority. He may talk of evolution, or he may otherwise bring his doctrine into line with what he conceives to be natural facts or general human concerns and beliefs. He will talk of such matters as if he were a realist, or an absolutist. And there is one thing that at the very least he will assert, namely, that his account of the process of judgment, and of the relations of the judgment to its objects, is a sound and true account, which everybody who rightly examines the process of judgment will see for himself to be true. As a teacher, then, the pragmatist is much like any other professor. He has his little horde of maxims; he proclaims the truth, he refutes errors; he asserts that we ought to believe thus or so; and thus lays down the law as vigorously as do other men. But, on the other hand, if the pragmatist, trying for the moment to be a pure pragmatist, reflects upon all this that he has uttered, and upon all this labor that he has done under the sun, then he must observe that in case his own view is as a pure pragmatism correct, he has instructed nobody at any time but himself as to any genuinely common truth; since, at every instant, he has merely been assuming fluent attitudes of his own, attitudes precisely as significant as were my venerable friend's symmetrical wrinkles. For upon each occasion of thought, he has faced

an inner situation of his own, and has opposed thereto a certain gesticulation called a predicate, and has therein found a certain triumph of what some would call his reason, while he now might well merely call it his own state of mind.

These, then, are the two aspects of the situation of the pragmatist himself. If the pragmatist has taught us a truth, then he has done something more than assume his needful inner attitudes. But if he has merely adjusted himself to his conscious environment by means of his own inner mental construction, then he has instructed nobody and has refuted nobody; and has said nothing that has any genuine meaning for anybody but himself. Accordingly, even when he has contradicted absolutism, in uttering such a contradiction he has merely assumed an anti-absolutist inner attitude of his own. Hence that attitude has involved no refutation of anybody else. The pure pragmatist, therefore, contradicts nobody but himself when he asserts that other people, say absolutists, are wrong. For none of his assertions can relate to anybody but himself as he happens to be when he makes them. So much, then, for the situation of the pragmatist, just in so far as he tries to be a pure pragmatist. But our situation, as his critics, seems to be for the moment at least decidedly complicated. For we can criticize him only by pointing out to him conscious needs that his account of the judging process somehow does not meet. If these needs are not his own, we have not refuted him. If they are his own, then their presence refutes him only because his doctrine, namely, the doctrine that a true judgment is such by reason of its success in meeting the needs that it attempts to meet, is illustrated by our proposed refutation.

How shall one sum up the meaning of these complications? They are not arbitrary inventions of anybody. They belong to the very essence of the situation of any finite thinker. I know of no way but to accept the conscious situation that we find, as well as to observe with the pragmatist that all this our finding is inevitably no merely *passive* acceptance. When we *both* act and reflect, both observe and construct, are both prag-

matists and theorists, what we make out about the meaning of all this fluent process of knowledge is to be summed up, I think, as follows. Hereby our pragmatism will be, not abandoned, but modified.

## VI

I have spoken of the need for companionship in our judgments as itself merely one of our given and human needs. But my illustrations have brought to mind, I hope, what I now venture to state as a general principle. It is this: When we feel the need of appealing to somebody else, or to ourselves at other times, in order even to express our opinion that our judgments have a warrant, this our need for companionship is precisely coincident with our need to regard our judgment as true. When the cat pursues the mouse, she presumably does so because she needs the mouse. But if she consciously asserted: "This is a mouse," she would need another cat, or some other critic of truth, as the being who ought to agree with her as to the truth of this assertion. I react to my environment as this present self. But if my reaction is a judgment, it is not only a bit of pure pragmatism; it is an appeal to a judge of truth whom I conceive either to be judging as one ought to judge, or else to be in the wrong. That I feel the need of such appeal, is itself at any moment, indeed, a mere datum, like any other momentary need of mine. But it is just this need that constitutes me a rational being. Let a pure pragmatist undertake to deny this assertion if he will. In denying he will merely assert that I ought not to make it, and in so denying he will appeal to a sound and rational mode of judgment passed upon consciousness in general. As for his own pure pragmatism, he either judges himself that it is a true account of judging in general, or he is no believer in his own doctrine. But if he is a believer in his own doctrine, then he judges that he characterizes our judging consciousness as another person than his present self ought to characterize it.

In brief, to believe that my judgment is true, is to believe that another point of view than my present point of view, in case this

other point of view is what it ought to be, actually confirms my own judgment about this object. This other point of view, however, is a point of view that relates to the same object, or else it could not be conceived as confirming my judgment about this object. Whoever believes seriously in the truth of his judgment, not only explicitly makes this present judgment, but implicitly believes two further things, namely: (1) That there is another conscious point of view than his own, and a point of view from which this same object is viewed; and (2) that this other point of view, without being a mere copy of his own, and without his own being a mere copy of it, is so related to his own point of view that each ought to agree with, to supplement, to enlarge, and to confirm the other. Now while the need to assert the reality of this other point of view is, indeed, one of the needs of the present judging consciousness, it is utterly vain to say that this need is fully met by any fact that the present judging consciousness of a finite being itself now constructs and finds present. For if what I find is for me merely my present opinion about my present object, and if I view this opinion merely as my present construction, then I simply do not view my opinion as true at all. I then view it merely as my state of mind. But if I view my opinion as true, I demand that another than my present self shall accept this opinion. This is the very nature of the truth-asserting consciousness. Such a consciousness lives in the light of another than itself. Yet it conceives this other than itself not as a realistic outer and independent object, but as a constructive self like itself, yet other than its present self — its own companion, because its own extension and wider expression. The judging self conceives itself as not fully expressed in this judgment, but as needing its own *alter ego* to aid it in its own expression. Herein the cognitive reactions of finite beings are different from other reactions. They seek, indeed, their own; but they seek it not merely as their own. They view themselves as essentially partial functions in a process whose unity is subject to one rule, the *ought* of the truth-seeking activity, whose object is this identical object, but whose

variety is the actually required variety of points of view regarding this one object.

If this is of the essence of the judging consciousness, then all that pragmatism asserts is, indeed, as far as it goes, valid; but a pure pragmatist is nevertheless self-refuting. We must be pragmatists, but also more than pragmatists. For if I need what is not my present self, if I need another than the present judging consciousness, in order to make it possible for me to assert the truth of my judgment, then, although my predicates are, as pragmatism asserts, the constructions of the present moment, still the truth of my judgment is not a mere construction of the present moment, but belongs to the unity of the various constructive processes of momentary selves, all of which are various expressions of the purpose which each one of them shares, so that, despite their variety, their selfhood is one.

Yet with this result we cannot pause. Our account is still incomplete. The assertion: "My judgment is true," amounts so far to the judgment: "I have companions, other selves who view the same object from other points of view — but who, as others, are still so one with myself that despite their variety they still *ought* to agree with me, since my *ought* is theirs, and since we are but various functions in the unity of one knowing process." All this implies the notion of the *ought*, a notion without the consciousness of which my present judgment, as we have seen, becomes even for myself, in case I reflect, a vain crooning, a mere wrinkling of the countenance, an empty pounding of my desk, a helpless shouting at nobody and about nothing. But this *ought*, what can it mean? A realist would say: "It means that if you judge falsely about the independent object, the independent object will perchance eliminate you as an unfit variation from the evolutionary process, or will in any case catch you and hold you to facts, squirm though you may." This realistic view, so far as it is sound at all, obviously denies the very independence which it pretends to attribute to the object. Nothing can refute me but an experience that is in unity with my own, and that is a function of the very selfhood which

is expressed in me. So realism must be translated into conscious, and so, apparently, into directly pragmatic terms. Plainly the *ought* means that my judging activity has a purpose that goes beyond my present partial expression. In other words, my present judging activity has a place in a process of experience such that if my judgment, despite its present success, still on the whole and in the end fails, this process, of which the judgment itself is a part, contains somewhere conscious contents which will show my partial failure. But since no self whose purposes are foreign to mine, or are in any way such as not to include mine, can possibly observe my failure in judgment, or can be conscious of what I mean and how and where I fail of my own purpose, it follows that to say: "I *ought* to judge thus or thus" is to say: "I myself, in a more fully enlightened expression of myself, am so constituted as to detect whether my judgment wholly fulfills or only partially fulfills my purpose." But to say: "We companions, who judge together the same object, we are all subject to the same *ought*," is therefore to say: "All our various selves are functions not only one of another, but of one conscious Self that somewhere and somehow pragmatically constructs an expression of itself in the light of which our various partial expressions are judged." Such a self I need just in so far as I need my judgment to be true. Such a self is real if my judgment has either truth or falsity.

But now, regarding any grade or type of socially communing selves that might have reached, from various points of view, such judgments regarding their common objects as rightly expressed so much of their *ought* as had yet come to their own consciousness, the same question that we have now repeatedly asked about our present selves would arise afresh. You do not escape the needs which pragmatism feels by merely multiplying the judges, while leaving them all finite. Is their view of the *ought* the view that they *ought* to hold? Are their conscious ways of judging this object only the expression of their social, but still relative, temporary, passing, unstable point of view? Mere multiplicity of opinions alters not in kind the

difficulty that first arose in our path as we studied the single momentary judgment. I appeal to my companions to confirm my judgment in case I believe my judgment to be true. If they disagree, I appeal to our common *ought*, that is, to our consciousness of our one selfhood. But even if my companions all agree with me, and even if we all believe together that we ought to agree, we shall no sooner see this to be our common pragmatic attitude towards our experience than we shall need, in order to maintain that our common judgment is actually true, to face the further question: "Is there possibly any other point of view than ours regarding this object — and one which renders ours in any sense false? Is there any ought that a still more inclusive view of our common purpose would see to be still higher than our ought?" If there is, then our common judgment is merely our present reaction, which is not true even of its own object. We shall need, I say, need in the pragmatic sense, to seek for the answer to these questions. The penalty of not being able to answer them will simply be that we shall have to call our intellectual constructions, so far as we shall then have reached them, mere attitudes of ours, and not any genuine truths at all. For truth is conformity to an ought. And a true ought is one that from every point of view confirms or refutes. Are such questions in themselves answerable? Does the real world contain anywhere the experiences that do answer them? Is there any final ought of judgment at all? Upon this question depends the whole issue as to whether you and I ever make any true judgments at all, or for that matter, whether we make any false judgments. Truth and falsity are indeed relative to insight, to experience, to life, to action, to the constructions which pragmatism emphasizes. But unless these constructions are what they ought to be they are not true. And unless there is an objective *ought* they are not even false. But if there is a true and a false, then there is a view for which the ought is known — known not as simply a single, transient, unstable, chance point of view, but as the object of one self-possessed and inclusive insight such that it *remains in-*

*variant whatever other points of view you attempt to conceive added to it.* Such an insight would belong to a self that did not fail to include pragmatisms of all kinds, but that simply and consciously *included them all*, in such wise that if you conceived other points of view, other reactions to situations, other judgments added, no change would result in the characterizations of its object which this self could view as fitting, permissible, and so true. For the ought is either a real ought or it is nothing. A judgment has its place in a complete system of truth, or else it is not true.

Now when we declare that our judgments are true, we appeal to such a self to confirm them. Of such an appeal our desire for social support and comradeship is merely a special instance, a fragmentary example. When we doubt whether our judgments are true, we doubt whether such a self does confirm them. When we need to call our judgments true or false, we need to conceive, to define, to address, such a self. If there is such a self, then there is truth. If there is no such self, pragmatism can truly assert nothing, can truly deny nothing, stands in the presence of no genuine reality, and can only continue to be conscious of how it wrinkles its wholly unreal countenance in the echoless void, where its assertions meet no genuine response, have not even any real spectators, and are meaningless both to God and to man, since then neither man nor God exists to fill the void.

But if there is such a self, then for every finite instance of life pragmatism remains a perfectly genuine truth — genuine as our ceaseless longings for the eternal is genuine — genuine as love and aspiration are genuine. Everything expresses itself according to its momentary light. Everything finite passes, changes, evolves, asserts itself and resigns itself, utters rules that are sincerely meant to be authoritative, but gives way to the authority of its own higher expression. Everything is practical; and everything seeks nothing whatever but its own true self, which is the Eternal.

For the Eternal is not that which merely lasts all the time. Only abstractions temporally endure. And they are not the life; they

are either only a dead image, or again, they are only an aspect of the life. That alone is eternal which includes all the varying points of view in the unity of a single insight, and which knows that it includes them, because every possible additional point of view would necessarily leave this insight invariant.

The possibility of such an eternal is, of course, the possibility of the existence, in a genuine sense together, as a *totum simul*, of the contents of an infinite series of practical and evolutionary processes. I have elsewhere set forth at length my grounds for believing both in the possibility and in the actuality of such an eternal existence. It is not my purpose, in this address, however, to expound a metaphysical theory for its own sake. I have desired merely to indicate what we need when we attempt to make true assertions.

I conclude, then, First: That pragmatism is right in asserting that every judgment, whatever else it may prove to be, is the expression of a present activity, determined by a consciousness of need, is responsive to this need, and is such as this need determines — in brief, is a constructive response to a situation, and is not a mere copying of an externally given object.

Secondly: That nevertheless, in so far as we ourselves observe that our present judgment has *only* this character of being our present and passing response to a given situation, we find that we need the judgment to be more than this. This need is the peculiar need that our judgment should be not only ours but true.

Thirdly: That this need for truth is the need that there should be other points of view, other actual judgments, responsive to the same situation, in other words, to the same object. These other points of view we first conceive as belonging to ourselves at other times, or to other selves, those of our companions. We conceive that all these judgments ought, despite their diversity of points of view, so to agree as to confirm one another, and so to unite in one system of truth as to characterize harmoniously the same object.

Fourthly: That these various points of view (in order thus to harmonize) and this *ought* (in order to hold for all of them) must

be conceived as belonging to, and as being included within, a single self, whose partial functions these various selves are, and whose common conscious purpose defines the ought to which each of the various judgments is to conform. Such a self we need to conceive in order to conceive our judgments as true; and we need to conceive it as having the same sort of embodiment in concrete experience that our present judgment now has.

Fifthly: Meanwhile, in so far as we conceive this self as like ourselves transient, passing, variable — its inclusive constructive judgments become once more like our own, not genuinely true, but only special points of view, which determine no genuine ought, and which are mere states of mind, or stages of its experience. Mere magnitude and multiplicity cannot constitute that aspect of consciousness which makes possible a genuine *ought*.

Accordingly, in the sixth place, in order to conceive our judgments as true, we need to conceive them as partial functions of a self which is so inclusive of all possible points of view regarding our object as to remain invariant in the presence of all conceivable additional points of view, and so conscious of its own finished and invariable purpose as to define an ought that determines the truth or falsity of every possible judgment about this object.

Seventhly, and lastly: If there is such an inclusive and invariant self, it is of course complete at no moment of time. It is inclusive of all temporal processes of evolution that could alter our view or any view of our object. Such a self is invariant and eternal, without thereby ceasing at any and every point of time to be expressed in finite and practical activities, such as appear in our own judgments. If there is such a self, our need to make judgments that can be true or false is satisfied. If there is no such self, no judgment is either true or false. The need for the Eternal is consequently one of the deepest of all our practical needs. Herein lies at once the justification of pragmatism, and the logical impossibility of pure pragmatism. Everything finite and temporal is practical. All that is practical borrows its truth from the Eternal.

# George H. Howison

(1834-1916)

UNTIL he settled down for twenty-five years of teaching at the University of California, Howison's life was a veritable Odyssey. His Maryland and Virginia parents migrated to the vicinity of Marietta, Ohio. Here his first introduction to philosophy was under the President who "lectured brilliantly in support of the Baconian method, which might have been called his hobby, and against German *a priori*ism and its results."<sup>1</sup> Theological training he received at Lane Seminary in Cincinnati. Then followed teaching and administering schools in Ohio and Massachusetts. In the last year of the Civil War he went to St. Louis and at Washington University taught mathematics and political science. He joined the famous St. Louis Philosophical Society where he met Harris, Emerson, and Alcott. Contact with these men contributed to his going to Massachusetts where he was Professor of Logic and Philosophy of Science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology from 1872 to 1878. Then followed a year at the Harvard Divinity School and association with the Concord School of Philosophy. He went next to Europe where he came under the influence of Du Bois-Reymond, Ebbinghaus, Paulsen, Lasson, Zeller, and Michelet. Once more in America he taught at the University of Michigan. Finally in 1884 he started his long career of teaching in California. The net philosophical result of his Odyssey was a vigorous Personal Idealism.

## THE LIMITS OF EVOLUTION<sup>2</sup>

IT HAS become a commonplace, that in the thinking of the nineteenth century the characteristic and epochal fact is the conception of Evolution. This conception has at length been carried out into every province of human

experience even, is now in some loose sense a general habit of thought, and seems on the eve of becoming all-dominant. Its raptest devotees have for some years demanded that the mind of man itself, in which the concep-

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from Buckham and Stratton, *George Holmes Howison, Philosopher and Teacher*, p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> Originally a lecture delivered at Stanford University, October, 1895. First printed in the *New World*, June, 1896. Reprinted in *The Limits of Evolution and Other Essays* (1901), pp. 1-15, 16-19, 20-21, 22-25, 25-34, 35-36, 37, 38-46, 47-51, 52-53, 53-55, and reprinted here with the permission of The Macmillan Company.

tion has its very origin and basis, shall confess its own subjection to the universal law, shall henceforth acknowledge itself to be simply a result of development from what is not mind, and shall regard all that it has been accustomed to call its highest attributes — its ideality, its sense of duty, its religion — as tracing their origin back to the unideal, the conscienceless, the unreligious, and as thus in some sense depending for their being on what has well been termed "the physical basis of life." This doctrine of mental origins need not be taken, however, in the sense of materialism. Indeed, its able and exact advocates expressly repudiate the materialistic construction often put upon it; and to meet their views with precision and justice, one ought carefully and persistently to discriminate their doctrine from materialism. To do this may cost much exercise of subtlety; but the distinction is real, be it as subtle as it may. Rather, the new doctrine is in its exactest statement a mode of idealism; and this idealistic philosophy takes two different forms.

In the hands of most evolutionists, the philosophy is agnosticism — idealism arrested at the line of mere subjectivity and skeptical negation. It demands that the God of our familiar traditional religion, the omniscient Creator who sees in the beginning that consummate end when the children of his hand shall bear his perfect spiritual image, and who thus is eternally their Redeemer, shall abdicate in favor of the Unknowable — the omnipresent Power that doubtless is immanent in all things, and whose resistless infinity comes forth in the ever growing process of evolution, but whose nature and whose final goal are forever hidden from even possible knowledge; the Immutable Energy, of which we may declare neither that it is conscious nor unconscious, neither that it is material nor spiritual, but only that it is the Secret behind the Veil.

But in the hands of others the philosophy of evolution becomes an *affirmative* idealism: the theory of the Unknowable gives way to the theory of Cosmic Theism, the Persistent Force to the Omnipresent Mind. God is made immanent in Nature — as directly

present throughout the immensity of the universe as each person's mind is to its own body. Every member in the vast whole, nay, every atom, is represented as instinct with God; yes, as *being* God in some limitation or other, and in some victorious expression or other, of his incessant energy. As declared in the threadbare lines of Pope —

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,  
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul.

All things are accordingly but aspects in the self-vision of the one and only eternal Consciousness, whose ceaseless rending of his successive disguises, that he may at length appear to himself in his proper image, unconfined and unobscured, is the explanatory cause of that ever changing, ever broadening, and ever deepening stream of existences which we have come to name the Drama of Evolution:

They change and perish all, but HE remains;  
A moment guess'd — then back behind the fold  
Immerst of darkness round the Drama roll'd  
Which, for the pastime of eternity,  
He doth himself contrive, enact, behold.

One or the other of these philosophies now claims the right to supplant the venerable forms of old religion, and seems almost on the verge of effecting its desire. The science of our century, stimulated to unprecedented discovery by ideas derived from the philosophy that ushered the century in, comes at the century's close to the support of these ideas with its vast accumulations; and the new consensus of our time appears to gain its proper utterance, now in the philosophy of Herbert Spencer, and now in that Neo-Hegelianism regarding which the current question is, whether it can get its best expression by being read as Hegel darwinized, or as Darwin hegelized. The change that seems imminent, in whichever way interpreted, would be profound indeed — far profounder than appears on the surface. Its revolutionary character is so little comprehended by the mass of the intelligent that many of the official teachers of Christianity, to say nothing of its less critical laity, not only dally with the new views, chiefly with Cosmic Theism, but openly embrace them,

with no apparent suspicion of their hostility to the principles that are fundamental to the Faith. Yet the hostility is real; and it is not from any caprice of his merely private way of thinking, but from a genuine, even if obscure, apprehension of the things indispensable to this Faith, that Mr. Balfour in his *Foundations of Belief* assails both forms of the new philosophy, which he prefers to designate Naturalism and Transcendental Idealism. Were the complete substitution of either for the philosophy underlying the older religion conclusively to take place, we of the Western civilization should literally have entered a new world.

Many doubtless believe that we are in that new world already, and beyond return. But many, probably more, still hang back, disturbed by anxious questionings — by an inward struggle between the sense of authority in what seems truth declared by science and the sense of majesty in what is felt to be an ineffable good which the apparent truth seems to put in peril. For my own part, I side with those who feel that the vaunted new world of evolutionary philosophy is of a portent so threatening to the highest concerns of man that we ought at any rate to look before we leap, and to look more than once. We ought to ask insistently what this new world really makes of mankind, of its vocation and its destiny, and we ought to insist upon an unevasive answer. Undoubtedly it may be said, and in so far said well, that the unfavorable bearing of a doctrine on hopes indulged by man cannot alter the fact of its truth. But we have at least the right, and in the highest case we have the duty, to demand that we shall know what its bearings on our highest interests are. If the truth bodes us ill, that very ill-boding is part of the whole truth; and though, unquestionably, we should have to submit to it even though it destroyed us, it cannot follow that we could approve of it or that we ought to approve of it. To glorify what is our destruction would be indeed to play the fool, and add to the tragedy of our being the anguish of self-contempt.

It ought to be plain, and I think it will be plain on a careful and exact examination,

that the so-called Philosophy of Evolution, when given such a scope as to make evolution the ground and explanation of the existence of *mind* in man, is destructive of the reality of the human *person*, and therefore of that entire world of moral good, of beauty, and of unqualified truth, which depends on personal reality for its being. This hostility to personality and its three-fold world of ideal life is a trait belonging to every evolutionary account of the mind in man, whether the account be made in terms of the agnostic or the cosmotheistic view of the Eternal Ground. Both views aim to explain the origin and progressive sustentation of the whole human consciousness by the merely *productive* causation exerted by that Ground. The Immanent God of the idealistic evolutionists is just as truly the sole real agent in producing and carrying on the consciousness of his creature, is just as incessantly and directly the creature's executive cause, as the Persistent Unknowable of the agnostic. The world of moral freedom, which is a fundamental postulate of the Christian Faith, is annulled by both conceptions alike; and while the theory of Cosmic Theism, if treated with such idealistic methods as those employed by Professor Joseph Le Conte in his later writings, may be made to provide for a quasi-immortality of the distinct single soul, we should nevertheless remember that the ever-present brooding of the immanent Cosmic Mind forever suppresses the possibility of real freedom, and consequently takes away from everlasting continuance all that could make the soul a genuine individual, and therefore all the moral worth that alone could give to continuance what religion means by Life Eternal.

Under a sheer evolutionary account of man, the world of real persons, the world of individual responsibility with its harmony of spontaneous dutifulness, disappears. With it disappears the genuine personality of God. An immanent Cosmic Consciousness is not a personal God. For the very quality of personality is, that a person is a being who recognizes others as having a reality as unquestionable as his own, and who thus sees himself as a member of a moral republic, standing to other persons in an immutable



relationship of reciprocal duties and rights, himself endowed with dignity, and acknowledging the dignity of all the rest. The doctrine of a Cosmic Consciousness, on the contrary, reduces all created minds either to mere phenomena or, at best, to mere modes of the Sole Divine Life, and all their lives to mere *effects* of its solitary omnipresent causation,

When me they fly, I am the wings.

This discovery, that the leading conceptions of the evolutionary philosophy are opposed to the vital conceptions underlying the historical religion of our Western civilization, of course does not in the least settle the merits of the issue between these conceptions in the court of rational evidence. But the interests at stake touch everything that imparts to human life the highest worth, and all that our past culture has taught us most to value. These interests, it may well be contended, are so great as to justify us in challenging any theory that threatens them. Human nature is not prepared to face despair, until it shall have been proved beyond all question, and after a search entirely exhaustive, that despair must indeed be faced.

Amid all the clamor of the times in extolling evolution, then, it is eminently seasonable to ask, *Just how much can the principle of evolution really do?* Is it of such reach and such profundity as actually to serve for the explanation of everything known? To state the question more exactly, How far over the fields of being does evolution really go, and with unbroken continuity? Let us try to discuss this question critically and definitively, and so let us ask,

(1) Whether evolution really has no limits at all?

(2) Whether it has no limits even within the universe of phenomena, and, if it has, what these limits are?

(3) If these limits, though recognizable, can still be passed, what is the only clue to the possibility of making evolution cosmically continuous?

But here many a reader will probably say,

How can there be any serious question in this matter at all, at least for minds that have finally broken with external authority, and believe the human faculties, working upon the evidence of facts, to be the only judges of what is true? Has not science now spoken in this matter, and in words that cannot be reversed? To this I would reply, that on the question really started in the mind of our times, the question which I raise in this essay, science in its own proper function has absolutely nothing to say. The truth is, *science* never has said anything about it, and never will nor can say anything about it. Many scientific *experts* have no doubt had much to say in the matter, and oftenest in the interest of the evolutionary philosophy. But they ought to get aware, and everybody else ought to keep aware, that when they talk of a *universal* principle of evolution, they have left the province of their sciences, and the very bounds of all science as such.

Of course, there is no longer any question at all as to the reality of evolution as a *fact*, within the specific region where it has been the subject of scientific inquiry. There is no question, either, of the use and importance of the hypothesis of evolution as a *method* of science, in that same definite and tested region. On this matter, it is the business of scientific experts alone to discover and to speak, and it is the privilege as well as the duty of philosophers, as of other people not experts in science, to listen to what the men of science report, and to accept it as soon as it comes with their settled consensus. But whatever some *men* of science may do in the way of philosophical speculation, *science* makes no claim whatever that evolution goes a hair's breadth farther than its scientific evidences carry it; and hitherto these evidences are strictly confined to the morphology and the physiology of *living* beings, and of living beings only — to the thread of descent by reproduction, convincingly traceable by observation and experiment from the lowest forms of plant life to the highest of animal.<sup>1</sup>

The extension of evolution from this lim-

<sup>1</sup> It is of course not ignored here that the entire series of physiological phenomena is everywhere accompanied by a "parallel" or concomitant series of psychic or "mental" phenomena, which co-ordinately undergoes an evolution of its

ited and lowly scope in the region of life into a theory of cosmical reach, and, still farther, into a theory of the *origin* of life, and then of the origin of *mind*, is an act for which science furnishes no warrant whatever. The step into boundlessness is simply the work of philosophical speculation, as it always is. I do not mean to say that philosophical speculation is necessarily without warrant, or destitute of evidences of its own, more or less valid within its own field. But what I do wish to say is, that these evidences are not the evidences of science; that scientific evidences must by their nature stop short of such sweeping universals; and that when either scientific men or the general public assume that such speculative extensions of principles reached in some narrow field of science have the support and the prestige of science, they are deluded by a sophism — a sophism really so glaring that its common prevalence is matter for astonishment, and might beforehand well be incredible. The correctness of this statement will appear as we go on.

No, our question is not in the least a question of science. It is only when men of science, or other people fascinated by the powers of the scientific method, undertake to raise this into the universal method of philosophy that our question ever comes forward. Upon it science is reservedly silent. It is a question of philosophy alone; and philosophers, whether professedly such or not, who make this new and surprising claim for the method and evidences of science, must not expect to carry the day by mere proclamation. They must come to the bar of historic philosophy, and be judged by that Reason which is the source of philosophical and of scientific method both, and the sole authority to determine the limits of either.

# I

Directing our attention first to the agnostic form of the new philosophy, and taking up

the first of our foregoing questions, we find at once a fact of the greatest significance. Yet in the popular apprehension of evolution this fact is continually so ignored or neglected that its statement will likely enough come to many readers as a genuine surprise, and not improbably as a mystery hard to fathom. The fact is this: When the question is brought home whether evolution has no limits at all, the careful and really qualified advocates of the evolutionary philosophy are found to be the most stringent deniers of the limitless range of evolution. Its limits, they say, are rigid and absolute: it reigns only in the field of *phenomena*, including the "outer" or physical world of the external senses, and the "inner" or psychical world open to mental experience, otherwise called "inner sense."

The distinction here implied is so very important that I shall surely be pardoned for going far enough into the explanation of philosophical technicalities to make it clear. It is the distinction between (1) the facts of direct experience — the realities that present themselves to our sensible apprehension, "outer" or "inner" as the case may be, forming a series of innumerable items arranged either by contiguity in Space or by succession in Time — and (2) a higher or profounder kind of reality which reason requires us to assume as the indispensable and sufficient ground for the occurrence and the ceaseless changing of the former, and, above all, for those changeless connections of sequence and position which we observe among them, and which by common consent we designate as the laws of cause and effect, or of the uniformity of Nature. To mark the fact that the realities of the first sort are without other evidence than their presentation to our sense "outer" or "inner," it is agreed in philosophy to call them "*phenomena*," that is, simply appearances in consciousness. To mark the counter-fact that the underlying Reality contrasted with appearances, and required as their explanation, is forever hidden from the senses, and is

own. In fact, one might say, with many of the biologists, that this psychic series is but a part of "physiology" totally conceived; though the thread of genetic connection is of course not at all the same as that in physiology proper. But this implication does not touch the question of the essential mind, the intelligent *principle*. See below, however, pp. 16-25. Cf. pp. 39-41. (Howison's references.)

therefore without other evidence than that of pure reason, philosophical consensus names it a "noumenon," that is, a reality present simply to the reason.

Upon this distinction between the phenomenal and the noumenal the whole discussion hangs and turns. To the proposition maintained by evolutionist philosophy, that evolution has no application beyond phenomena and can have none, historic philosophy at once gives its assent and its authority.<sup>1</sup> The dispute begins only when the school of evolution goes on to place the whole of human or other living nature in the realm of the phenomenal, denying to the living, even as a psychic being, any noumenal reality of its own, and treating even the human person as a mere form in which, as in all other phenomena, the supersensible Noumenon, one and sole, appears; or, in other words, as a mere manifestation or effect of the Noumenon, which is held by the school to be omnipresent, immutable, immanent in all phenomena, indivisible and all-embracing, solitary and universal.

Beyond this point of agreement among all evolutionists, agnostic and pantheistic alike, the dispute opens further, and within the evolutionist school itself, when those of the agnostic party go on to declare that the Reality beyond phenomena — which they insist exists as an "immutable datum of consciousness" — must be regarded as permanently the Unknowable. The dispute gets to its keenest when they base this agnostic dogma on the claim that nothing deserving the name of *knowledge* is attainable in any way except the method of natural science. . . .

If it were indubitable that we can only know what our inner and outer *senses* tell us — only the facts of present and past experience — then "it needs must follow as the night the day" that we can know only phenomena, and that the noumenal Reality behind phenomena must remain forever unknowable. But to say, even with deep Tennyson (God save the mark!), that "we have but faith," that "we cannot know,"

that "knowledge is of things we see," is to dogmatize in the very premises of the debate, and to raid upon the central matter at issue. The question whether we have not some knowledge independent of any and all experience — whether there must not, unavoidably, be some knowledge *a priori*, some knowledge which we come at simply by virtue of our nature — is really the paramount question, around which the whole conflict in philosophy concentrates, and on the decision of which the settlement of every other question hangs. To cast the career of a philosophy upon a negative answer to it, as if this were a matter of course — which the English school from Hobbes onward has continually done — is to proceed not only upon a *petitio*, but upon a delusion regarding the security of the road.

This placid and complacent delusion might far more fitly be called an *ignoratio elenchii* — an "overlooking of the thumbscrew" — than the fallacy which actually has that name; for those who entertain it are blind to the snare laid for them in the very structure of that experience on which they build their doctrine, and risk unawares the thumbscrew prepared by Kant. He suggested that experience may be not at all simple, but always complex, so that the very possibility of the experience which seems to the empiricist the absolute foundation of knowledge may depend on the presence in it of a factor that will have to be acknowledged as *a priori*. This factor issues from the *nature* of the mind that has the experience, and introduces into experience all that distinguishableness, that arrangedness, and that describable form, without which it could not be conceived as apprehensible or intelligible, that is, as an experience at all.

The almost surprisingly happy thought of Mr. Spencer and his school at this juncture — to turn the flank of Kant and his "pure reason" by applying the conception of evolution to the origin of ideas, and thus explaining *a priori* knowing away — does not do the work it was contrived for. It is certainly adroit to say that cognitions which in us

<sup>1</sup> Just as, at the same time, it condemns and discredits Positivism for its attempt to ignore this fundamental distinction, essential to the being of philosophy and expressive of the very nature of reason.

human beings are felt as irresistible, as if part of the nature of things and incapable of change or of alternative, are simply the result in us of transmitted inheritance; that our remote ancestral predecessors had these cognitions at most as associations only habitual, regarding which no incapability of exception was felt, and that *our* feeling them as necessities is merely the result of their coming to us through generation after generation of successive ancestors, handing on their accumulated associations in ever increasing mass and cohesion. But this clever stroke cannot get rid of Kant's suggestion, that in order to the solidifying of associations in *any* consciousness there must be some *principle* — some *spring* — of association, of unification, of synthesis, in that consciousness itself. Nor can anybody merely by the suggestion of a counter-theory, however plausible, dispose of those profound and penetrating arguments of Kant's by which the great Königsberger shows Time and Space, for instance, to be *a priori*, and exposes the fact that every attempt to explain them as generalizations from experience must tacitly assume them already operative in the very formation of the experiences from which the generalization is made. Without them, Kant's point is, the thinker could not make use of the experiences to generalize to them; he must have had them, and *in forming experiences* employed them already, in order to his having *in* the experiences the requisite characters on which to rest and support the generalization.

Strive as one may, there is no escape from Kant's implication that not even evolution<sup>2</sup> can produce Time in our consciousness — the perception of the *infinite* possibility of succession. For Time is the necessary presupposition without which evolving consciousness could not have the groupings of succession, hardening evermore, that are supposed to lead slowly on to the consciousness of Time as a necessary and immutable condition of experience. There is for the

evolutionist no escape from Kant's clutches, except he maintain either that succession can exist without Time, or else that Time is *per se* itself a *thing*, instead of a relating-principle for things. If he take the former alternative, he falls into Kant's *elench* more hopelessly than ever, for he will have to tell what, in that case, succession intelligibly is. If he take the latter, he will recede into antiquated metaphysics, which talks about existence *per se*, out of all relation to minds, and which, at any rate in respect to the nature of Time, received its quietus in Kant's *Transcendental Aesthetic*.

The cautious thinker, then, who would estimate the value of agnostic evolutionism in the light of the history of philosophical discussion, will join in the verdict that the current philosophy of evolution is guilty of the fallacy of *petitio* when it offers its argument for the Unknowable as if it were a proof conclusive. . . .

The self-contradiction of agnosticism — to pass now to its second alleged defect — is a characteristic which it shares in common with other philosophies that fall short of a view completely comprehensive. The self-contradiction comes out in a peculiar way, particularly interesting for the critical history of thought. It may be made apparent as follows. The system maintains at once the two propositions, (1) that all knowledge is founded wholly on sense-perception, physical or psychic, and is consequently restricted to the objects and items of experience, that is, to phenomena merely; and (2) that the Reality beyond phenomena is nevertheless an immutable datum of consciousness, that is, an unquestionable certainty, or, in equivalent words, a matter of unqualified knowledge. In short, it is maintained that we can only know by means of sense, and yet can really know that the supersensible exists, that our cognitive powers are confined to the field of phenomena, and yet that they somehow penetrate beyond that field sufficiently

<sup>2</sup> Even the *cosmic* conception of evolution was perfectly familiar to Kant. In fact, Kant was the first to expound it in grand detail (in his *Universal History of Nature and Theory of the Heavens*), and he therefore cannot have failed to include it mentally in his sweeping assertion that there is a vicious circle in every attempt to found our consciousness of Time on generalization.

to *know* that a Noumenon is real. We are naturally led to ask, By what strange power is this feat accomplished? — by what criterion of truth is this certainty tested? Of course it cannot be by sense, for the object is supersensible; how, then, is it managed? We get this answer: We know the truth that the Unknowable exists, by the criterion of all truth, namely, the “inconceivability of the opposite.” But if this criterion really says anything in support of genuine certainty, it says that a pure conception of the mind, going quite beyond the literal testimony of sense, is objectively valid, in and of itself.

Manifestly, the only way of escape from this very awkward conclusion, so plainly contradictory of the prime thesis that our knowledge rests on sense alone and is confined to things of sense, is to say that inconceivability means nothing but the *incapacity* which limited experience begets in us — our impotence to think beyond the bounds built for us by the accumulated pressure of hereditary impressions. But here, if we would maintain the empiricist theory of knowledge in its consistent integrity, we are confronted with two difficulties: (1) How can impotence to pass the limits of experience suddenly be transformed into power to pass them and pierce to a Noumenon, even as barely existent? (2) How can our incapability of conceiving the opposite of existence for the Noumenon mean anything more than that we are so hemmed in by the massed result of our sense-impressions as to be incapable of releasing our thoughts from their mould? — that we must think as sense compels us, and are unable to tell whether the thinking means anything more than its own occurrence, or not? Construed with rigorous consistency, then, the existence of a noumenal Unknowable as “an immutable datum of consciousness” turns out to mean nothing but this: That our conceptions are built for us in such irresistible fashion we cannot help *supposing* there is such a Noumenon; but whether a genuine Reality answers to this helpless thought, there is nothing to indicate.

There thus comes to light a more secret and more deeply constitutional contradiction in this agnostic scheme — the contradiction

between the merely evolutionary origin of our power of thought and the reality of that Unknowable from which the system derives its main agnostic *motif*. Here we learn, if we attend to what the situation means, that we cannot affirm an absolute Reality and then stop short, with the result of leaving it entirely vacuous and blank. If we can trust our conceiving powers or our judgment in the transcendent act of asserting the *reality* of the Noumenon, why should we be smitten with sudden distrust of these supersensible powers when we come to the problem of knowing the nature of this transcendent Being? Surely there ought to be shown some justification for this arrest of the transcending cognition, this apparently arbitrary discrimination between one of its acts and other possible similar acts. It will not do to plead here that the Noumenon is *per se* supersensible, but that the reach of our conceptive powers, on the contrary, is limited to the world of sense. If we assume that our cognizing the existence of the Noumenon is anything more than an illusion, we have already granted to one of our conceptions the privilege of overstepping this limit.

In this impotence of the principle of evolution to cross the break between the phenomenal and the noumenal, displayed, as it is, in such an apparel of contradictions and assumptions, the philosophic range of evolution finds its First Limit.

## II

Passing to our second question, we ask: Can evolution be made validly continuous throughout the world of *phenomena*? Here we speedily become aware that it cannot have even this compass, *except at the cost of undergoing a change of meaning in kind*. The primary meaning of evolution is the meaning proper to the world of *living* beings, in which it had its first scientific suggestion, and where alone its scientific evidences are found. But biological evolution — the only evolution thus far *known* to science — means not only *logical* community, or resemblance for observation and thought, but also likeness due to descent and birth; due to a *physiological* community,

through the process of reproduction. It is directly dependent on the generative function,<sup>2</sup> and its native meaning is lost when we pass the boundaries of the living world. What is it to mean when it has lost its first and literal sense? What is the continuous thread by which a unity of development is to hold, not only among living beings, but also among those without life, since it cannot any longer be physiological descent? How is this chasm, that now comes into view between the inorganic and the organic, to be bridged?

Empiricist principles would fain bridge it with some element of sensible experience, by some hypothesis made in terms of such experience alone. There is no hypothesis of this kind, however, but that of "spontaneous generation" — whatever this handy phrase may mean. This hypothesis historic philosophy and recent science alike correctly designate as a *generatio aequivoca*, and they show that all the indications of careful biology are steadily more and more against the assumption which it covers. The logical march of the notion Evolution here suffers a certain arrest; the thread of continuity disappears from the region recognized by agnosticism as verifiably known, and it seems to vanish into something unknowable. We instinctively ask, as we before asked about the unknowable Noumenon, Why should we believe that such a continuity exists at all? How can there be any evidence of its actuality, if there is no real evidence but the evidence of experience?

In this break between the inorganic and the organic, evolution, as a principle of such continuity as philosophic explanation requires, finds its Second Limit.

### III

On the other hand, the recognition of continuity in some sense or other — a logical or intelligible resemblance, and a continued progression of resemblance, among all the parts of the inorganic world, and between the parts of the inorganic and those of the organic too — is to our mental nature irresistible. What is the true sense in which the reality of this continuous connection ought to be

taken? Some explanation of it is for our intelligence imperative. It cannot mean literal descent by physiological generation; it cannot be by reproduction through sap or through blood. What, then, *can* it mean — what alone *must* it mean? Inexplicability by anything merely sensible — even psychic, when this is taken simply as the sensibly psychic — here shows up plainly. If the notion of continuous genesis is to be made apprehensible to our understanding, if it is not to vanish into something utterly obscure and meaningless, the meaning for it must be sought and found in some mode of mind — of *our* mind — quite other than the mode of sense. But such a mode the agnostic interpretation of evolution, and, reciprocally, the evolutionary interpretation of mind as originating out of non-mind, necessarily denies.

At this juncture, then, where a new break is discovered — the break between physiological and logical genesis — the philosophical reach of evolution betrays its Third Limit.

### IV

The preceding result is recognized — in fact, is proclaimed — by agnostic evolutionism itself, in its tenet of an Omnipresent Energy, whose existence it maintains as a certainty, but whose nature it declares inscrutable. This inference of some necessary noumenal Ground is the deep trait in Mr. Spencer's doctrine, answering to the true nature of the philosophic impulse, and constituting the profoundest claim of his scheme to the title of a philosophy. But the dogma that the nature of this Ground is past finding out really means that the universal resemblance among phenomena of every order — the mysterious kinship, not only of the inorganic and the organic, but of the entire physical and physiological world and the psychic world — must be accepted as a dead and voiceless fact, a "final inexplicability," as Stuart Mill used to say. But surely philosophy means explanation, else it is not philosophy; surely, too, a "final inexplicability" does not explain. While, then, historic philosophy, disallow as it may their theory

<sup>2</sup> Either sexual or asexual or (by fissure, etc.), as the case may be.

of knowledge, goes heartily along with Mr. Spencer and his school in their metaphysics thus far, it declines to arrest its progress with them here, and pronounces that in the Something at the heart of universal phenomenal resemblance, still to be explained, but by *their* form of evolutionism confessedly inexplicable, evolution as an explanatory principle comes upon a fatal check.

In this self-confessed inability to supply any final explanation of the great fact upon which its own movement rests, evolution as a principle of philosophy, that is, of thorough explanation, exposes its Fourth Limit. There is a bottomless chasm between the Unknowable and the Explanatory.

v

When the philosophic progress has arrived at this point, however, its further pathway becomes evident, and consistent thought will discover what this limiting Something is. It may provisionally be called, correctly enough, the Omnipresent Energy; it might well enough be called by the apter and still less assumptive title of the Continuous Copula. We can now determine the real nature of this undefined Something; and I say its *nature* purposely, and with the intention of discriminating; for our immediate settlement will only be in regard to its *kind*, and not as to the specific being or beings, amid a possible world of noumena, in which that kind is presented. We cannot, by our next philosophic advance, determine forthwith whether the being having the nature referred to is the absolutely Ultimate Being of that kind; but the *kind* may be ultimate, even though the being be not so. It will be an important step, however, if we can show now what the nature of the yet undermined Copula is. Moreover, it will at once appear in what being, known to us, the *proximate* seat of that nature is — the seat first at hand, relatively to the connection between the parts and species of Nature, and to the evolutionary character which that connection undeniably wears.

It is a common characteristic of most philosophies that they proceed somewhat precipitately with the act of noumenal or

metaphysical inference, and, passing *human* nature forgetfully by, leap at once to the being of what they call the Absolute Reality, and to the determination of the nature belonging to that. This is like settling the nature and reality of the landscape while ignoring the nature and existence of the eye that sees it and in truth gives it being, or helps to give it being. Not the Absolute Being, not the Absolute Mind, or God, which the reality of evolution may finally presuppose, but rather mind as a nature or kind, and, proximately, mind in man, as the immediate and direct expression of the Copula whose nature we seek to know, must be the first and unavoidable Reality reached by metaphysical cognition.

That this is the accurate truth will become apparent by analyzing the conception of evolution and noting in the result the conditions essential to the conception if it is to be taken as a real principle as wide as the universe of possible phenomena. It will readily become evident that the elements uniting in the notion Evolution are the following:

(1) *Time and Space.* The conception of evolution is a serial conception, relating only to a world of items arranged in succession, or else in contiguity more or less close, or more or less remote. But Time and Space are the media without which this seriality essential to evolution could neither be perceived nor thought.

(2) *Change and Progression.* Evolution is not a static but a dynamic aspect of phenomena. Under evolution, the items in the time-series and the space-series are viewed as undergoing perpetual change; and not simply change, but change that on the whole is marked by stages of increase in complexity and diversity of being, so that the world of phenomena, as a whole, is conceived as gradually attaining a greater and greater fullness and richness of life. The expert in biology would very rightly tell us that the "ascent of life" is extremely irregular; that there is decline and decadence as well as growth and aggrandizement. But even the biologist finds the persistent ascent in life when life is regarded in the large, in the range from the lowest plant to the highest animal, and



through the series of the great genera within these kingdoms. And when we take the still larger view of *cosmic* evolution, this element of progression or ascent becomes the central one in the conception.

(3) *Causation*. This would be better described as Natural Causation or Physical Causation, in order to distinguish it, by an apt term, from another element which, we shall presently see, enters into evolution, and which we should correspondingly name Metaphysical or Supernatural<sup>2</sup> Causation. The causation we are considering now is directly involved in evolution by the preceding elements of Change and Progression. We should mean by it the Mechanism, the Chemism, or the Association, involved in the changes of phenomena. The habit of popular speech and surface thought is to regard and describe causation as a process by which one phenomenon "produces" another. But an exacter thought states the two as simply in a certain relation, the relation of Cause and Effect. In this light, causation holds both in physical and psychical succession, and means a certain connection or *nexus* between phenomena.

The philosophy of evolution most current, based on the dogma of the sense-origin of all knowledge, and on the sole and final efficiency of the method of science, unanalyzed to its true presuppositions, consistently interprets this connection into the merely regular succession of the past — a sequence merely *de facto*; but if we thoroughly consider what is logically presupposed in scientific method as actually used by the competent, we shall readily see that it should be interpreted as *necessary and irreversible* succession, a sequence inevitable forever. For the vital process in scientific method is induction, or generalization; and the secret of it, as actually employed in scientific practice, lies in taking observed successions in phenomena, and when with the help of the various methods of precision — agreement, difference, joint agreement, concomitant variation — they are brought to represent exactly what occurs, then suddenly giving to these merely historical successions

the value of universal laws, having a predictive authority over the future *in perpetuum*.

But now the crucial question is on us: *What prompts and supports the generalization?* It cannot be just the facts, for, simply by themselves, they can mean nothing but themselves. What is it, then? The implication is not to be escaped: the ground of every generalization is *added in* to the facts by the generalizing *mind*, on the prompting of a conception organic in it. This organic conception is, that actual connections between phenomena, supposing them to be exactly ascertained, are not simply actual, but are necessary. The logic of induction thus rests at last on the mind's own declaration that between phenomena there are connections which are *real*, not merely apparent, not simply phenomenal, but noumenal; that the reality of such connections lies in their necessity, and that the processes of Nature are accordingly unchangeable. But the implication most significant of all in this tacit logic is the indispensable postulate of the whole process; namely, that this necessity in the connection of phenomena *issues from the organic action of the mind itself*. The mind itself, then, if the processes of science are to be credited with the value of truth, is the proximate seat of that nature for which we are seeking as explanatory of what the Continuous Copula really is. At next hand to Nature, our mind itself — the mind of each of us — is that Copula. This truth will become clearer as we proceed with the analysis of evolution.

(4) *Logical Unity*. It is of course obvious that evolution, like every other scheme of conception, must have its parts conformed to the laws of logical coherence, and that in this sense Logical Unity is a factor in the very notion of evolution. But we can now see that it is present there in a sense far profounder and more vital. In fact, according to the result of the preceding step in our analysis, Logical Unity is simply the direct and manifest version of Causation in terms of mind, which we just now came upon as the authentic meaning of the causal Copula. As

<sup>2</sup> The reader is warned that in interpreting this word in the present volume, he must divest himself of all its magical and thaumaturgical associations. It means nothing but supersensible, rational, or ideal.



the logic of induction sends us directly to the organic or *a priori* activity of thought for a warrant of science, and thus indicates mind to be the real nature of the Omnipresent Energy, it now becomes evident that the vague thread of kinship running through all phenomena is the thread of *logic*, and that the suggested common parentage of all is just the parentage of thought....

The bond of kindred uniting all these beings and orders of being, so contrasted and divergent, so incapable of any merely natural or physical generation one from the other, is the inner harmony between the lawful members in a single intelligible Plan, issuing from one and the same intelligent nature. In short, the only *cosmic* genesis, the only genesis that brings forth alike from cosmic vapor to star, from star to planetary system, from mineral to plant, from plant to animal, from the physiological to the psychic, is the genesis that constitutes the life of logic — the genesis of one conception from another conception by virtue of the membership of both in a system of conceptions organized by an all-embracing Idea. This all-determining Idea can be nothing other than the organic form intrinsic in the self-active mind, whose spontaneous life of consciousness creatively utters itself in a whole of conceptions, logically serial, forming a procession through gradations of approach, ever nearer and nearer, to the Idea that begets them each and all....

(5) *Final Cause, or Ideality.* This, the mind's consciousness of its own form of being as *self-conscious* — that is, spontaneously conscious and spontaneously or *originally* real — is the ultimate and authentic meaning of causality. In the cause as self-conscious Ideal, the consciousness of its own thinking nature as the "measure of all things" — as "source, motive, path, original, and end" — we at length come to causation in the strictest sense, Kant's *Causality with freedom*. It might happily be called, in contrast to

natural causation, supernatural<sup>1</sup> causation; or, in contradistinction from physical, meta-physical causation. The causality of self-consciousness — the causality that creates and incessantly re-creates in the light of its own Idea, and by the attraction of it as an ideal originating in the self-consciousness purely — is the only complete causality, because it is the only form of being that is unqualifiedly free.

Here, in seeing that Final Cause — causation at the call of self-posed aim or end — is the only full and genuine cause, we further see that Nature, the cosmic aggregate of phenomena and the cosmic bond of their law which in the mood of vague and inaccurate abstraction we call Force, is after all only an effect. More exactly, it is only a cause in the sense in which every effect in its turn becomes a cause. Still more exactly, it is the proximate or primary effect of the creating mind; within and under which prime effect, and subject to its control as a sovereign conception in the logic of creation, every other effect — every phenomenon and every generic group of phenomena — must take its rise, and have its course and its exit. Throughout Nature, as distinguished from idealizing mind, there reigns, in fine, no causation but transmission. As every phenomenal cause is only a transmissive and therefore passive agent, so Nature itself, in its aggregate, is only a passive transmitter. But because of its origin in the Final Causation of intelligence, its whole must conform to the ideal that expresses the essential form of intelligent being, and all its parts must follow each other in a steadfast logical ascent toward that ideal as their goal....

In the light of the foregoing analysis, a thorough philosophy would now move securely forward to the conclusion that the Continuous Copula required in evolution, the secret Active Nexus without which it would be inconceivable, is at nearest inference *the spiritual nature or organic personality of man himself*.<sup>2</sup> Whether there is not also involved a profounder, an absolute Imper-

<sup>1</sup> Again a warning against false associations with this word.

<sup>2</sup> The reader will notice that all the argumentation which follows really proceeds upon the tacit implication that this intelligent nature is not limited to man, but is, in whatever degree of phenomenal manifestation, common to all living

sonation of that nature, to be called God, is a further and distinct question, legitimate no doubt, but not to be dealt with till the *immediate* requirements of the logic in the situation are met. These requirements point us, first and unavoidably, to the intelligence immanent in the field of evolution, the intelligence of man and his conscious companions on the great scene of Nature; and, at closest hand of all — first of all — to the typical intelligence of man simply. The whole question, so far as anything more than conjectural evidence is concerned, is man's question: he is the witness to himself for evolution; in *his* consciousness, directly, and only there, does the demand arise for an explanation of it; in himself he comes upon the nature of mind as directly causal of the form in Nature — of the ideally genetic connection holding from part to part in it — and of the reality of progress there as measured by his ideals of the True, the Beautiful, and the Good.

Here, now, we arrive at the point where we naturally pass from the criticism of agnostic evolutionism to that of pantheistic idealism or Cosmic Theism. We promised, you will recollect, to attend carefully to what the fullest historic philosophy has to say in judgment of this theory of the world as well as of the other. We shall see that this world-view gains much over the agnostic, and yet that it falls short of the explanatory ideal.

The commanding question, let us remember, is whether the mind in the world, and pre-eminently the mind of man, is only a phenomenon like the objects it perceives in Time and in Space, or is transcendently different from these, and noumenal. The favorable significance of Cosmic Theism for man and his supreme interests, and of every other species of affirmative idealism, lies in its passing beyond the agnostic arrest at the Omnipresent Energy, by its recognition that

the logic of evolution, as depicted in such an analysis as we have just made, requires in the Noumenon a self-conscious nature. This is a step greatly human, because it opens somewhat more widely than agnosticism, and certainly more affirmatively, the chance for hope that the existence of no conscious beings may fail of everlasting continuance and fulfillment. Yet it has also an unfavorable bearing on the highest human aspirations, not only because it fails to reach immortality as an assured and necessary truth,<sup>1</sup> but for the far graver reason that it decidedly tends to leave all individual minds in the world of mere phenomena; or, if it permits them to be conceived of as sharing in absolute reality, by being parts of modes of the Sole Noumenon, deprives them by this very fact of that real freedom which is essential to personality and to the pursuit of a genuine moral ideal.<sup>2</sup> It is therefore all-important for true human interests that a reality unqualifiedly noumenal shall be vindicated not only to human *nature*, but to each particular human mind. If the reasoning about to be employed for this purpose should seem to the reader to carry its conclusions widely beyond man — as wide as all conscious life, of which human consciousness must now be regarded as only the completed Type — I know no reason why men should hesitate at this, or grudge to living beings whose phenomenal lives are at present less fulfilled than their own the chance for larger existence than immortality and freedom give. But let us come to the argument.

Reverting to our analysis, we may now clearly see that the elements essential to evolution are simply the elements organic in the human mind. Evolutionary philosophy, of whatever form, teaches that these elements — Time, Space, Causation, Logical Unity, Ideality — are, in the human mind, the results of the process of evolution. The agnostic evolutionist holds that they are

beings. It is stated in terms of *human* nature, first, because, as brought out below, it is the human being who raises the question here argued, and argues it; and, secondly, because in man alone do we come by the path of experience upon its rounded Type.

<sup>1</sup> See Professor Royce in *The Conception of God*, pp. 322-26. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1897.

<sup>2</sup> For the thorough, if unwitting and unwilling acknowledgment of this by a leading representative of this philosophy, see Professor Royce's discussion of this question in *The Conception of God*, pp. 292 f., 305 f., 315 mid. (where the last sentence, if logically legitimate, would read, "The antinomy is (*not*) solved"), and 321; cf. the footnote.

gradually deposited there through associations ever accumulating in the long experience of successive generations, until at length they become in us practically indissoluble, though theoretically not. The pantheistic idealist penetrates behind the associations, to explain their possibility and their origin by his doctrine that the rational elements have their seat, not directly in the mind of each man, but in the eternal and universal Mind to which he gives the name of God. In neither view is *a priori* consciousness admitted in the individual person *as* individual, nor in the human mind at all, as *specifically* human. In fact, by the associative agnostic method, which would build these elements up outright in the course of evolution from what seems to be their assumed nonexistence, they are all put as if explicable by evolution. But as our analysis has shown, they are all, on the contrary, prerequisites to the existence of evolution as well as to our conceiving of it. Legitimately, they are likewise inexplicable by the pantheistic method of seating them *a priori* in God, to be thence gradually imparted to minds as they are slowly created by the process of psychic evolution; for this ignores the fact that *a priori* cognition, by virtue of its pertinent proofs, is an act in the mind of each particular conscious being, be the development of the mere experience of such being as low as it may. The proper interpretation of *a priori* consciousness, at the juncture where it is established, is at most, and at next hand, as a human, not a divine, original consciousness, and, indeed, as a consciousness interior to the individual mind.

As for the proofs of *a priori* consciousness in us, these have perhaps been clearly enough given in the analysis by which it was shown that the several elements are prerequisite not only to the conception of evolution, but to our human experience itself, and to the system of Nature into which they organize that experience. . . .

Moreover, as pointed out near the beginning of the present essay, they are conditions precedent to forming any habitual association at all. It is just in thinking all these elements in an active *originating* Unit-thought,

or an "I," that the essential and characteristic nature of man or any other real intelligence consists. Such an originating Unit-thinking, providing its own element-complex of primal thoughts that condition its experience, and that thus provide for that experience the form of a cosmic Evolutional Series, is precisely what an intelligent being is. Thus creatively to think and be a World is what it means to be a man. . . .

Evolution itself, then, and not evolutionary philosophy merely, in finding in this rational nature of every mind its proximate source and footing, finds there its Final Limit.

#### VI

We have here reached the proof that what is most distinctively meant by Man is not, and cannot be, the result of evolution. Man the spirit, man the real mind, is not the offspring of Nature, but rather Nature is in a great sense the offspring of this true Human Nature. As we have seen, the only thing that can overspan all the breaks which evolution must pass if it is to be a cosmic principle, is idealizing thought — the humane nature, in its highest, largest sense. It is this that adds in to the chaotic insignificance of the mere mass of things the lofty theme of ever-ascending Progress. Apart from this ideality, there would be no cosmic order at all, no Manward Procession. Yet, that the whole of Nature cannot be referred to men alone, or to other conscious beings directly on the scene of Nature; that the existence of an absolutely universal form of their nature is required for her cosmic being — this will not be denied when our psychology is as exact and all-recognizing as it should be. Such a psychology will discover within the complex of experience, human or lower, in addition to the system of *a priori* elements that constitutes the core of intelligence, another component. This other component, which Kant named "sensation," to mark the fact that it expresses something incomplete in us, something which must be supplemented to us by reception<sup>1</sup> from what is not ourselves, is best interpreted as a limit which points to the co-operation<sup>2</sup> of some other noumenal being

<sup>1</sup> The reader should beware not to interpret these terms "reception" and "co-operation" *literally*, that is, in the light

with men and other conscious centres. But when once the conditioning relation is shown to exist from man toward Nature, as the scene of evolution, instead of from Nature toward man; when once it is seen — as Huxley, the protagonist of evolution, at last came so clearly, if so unawares, to imply<sup>1</sup> — that in Conscience at least, the ideal of Righteousness, man has that which no cosmic process can possibly account for, but to which, rather, the cosmic process presents an aspect of unmistakable antagonism, then our way will come open to determine the co-operating Noumenon, the Supreme Reality, as also having this higher human nature, as having it in its ideal perfection, and we shall have found the entrance to the path toward the demonstration of God. For the survey and the tracing of that path, this is neither the place nor the occasion.<sup>2</sup>

## VII

Let us turn back now to the point struck upon near our beginning — to the question, Is evolution consistent with the Christian religion? It is a trite question now, perhaps overworn; and probably very many readers think that it is already settled in the affirmative. Yet it is a question of the utmost pertinence, and ought to be pushed to a decisive but discriminating answer. There are those who are only too ready with an answer decisive enough, but unfortunately they are of two opposed extremes. Both parties are of one mind as to the incompatibility of Christianity and evolution; but while the one says that all evolution must therefore be anathema, the other jeeringly retorts, "So much the worse, then, for your religion!" And the loose verdict of the times is doubtless in favor of whatever can be made to appear as the cause of science. The trouble with such disputants is, that their assertions are far more decided than discriminating, and so are not in any final sense decisive. We may

justly claim, however, that the outcome of our inquiry into limits enables us to answer this question with the definite discrimination required. This outcome shows us the narrow limits of evolution as a doctrine of unpretending science. Still more significantly, it brings out the unavoidable limits of evolution as a philosophy, as regards the origin of man and the nature of the eternal creative Power. In short, it teaches us that the answer to the question whether Christianity and evolution are compatible, turns wholly on the stretch that evolution has over existence, especially over human nature.

But it is time we all understood how finally at variance with the heart of Christian faith and hope is any doctrine of evolution that views the *whole* of human nature as the product of "continuous creation" — as merely the last term in a process of transmissive causation. The product of such a process could not be morally free, nor, consequently, morally responsible. . . .

But hope of immortality as Life Eternal and faith toward Duty — fealty to our human dignity as moral free-agents, quickened by fealty to God as the grounding Type of that freedom — are the very soul of Christian Faith. The impartial philosophical observer cannot but be filled with surprise, then, at seeing official teachers of the Christian Religion so strangely oblivious of real bearings as to accept — yes, sometimes proclaim — an evolution unlimited with respect to man as consistent with their faith. Plain in the doctrinal firmament of every Christian, clear like the sun in the sky, should shine the warning: *Unless there is a real man underived from Nature, unless there is a spiritual or rational man independent of the natural man and legislatively sovereign over entire Nature, then the Eternal is not a person, there is no God, and our faith is vain.*

. . . The professed Philosophy of Evolution

of ordinary natural or efficient causation only, as it is our bad uncritical habit to do. Their genuine interpretation must be by means of *final* cause. But see the essay on "The Harmony of Determinism and Freedom," pp. 332-51.

<sup>1</sup> See his Romanes Lecture on "Evolution and Ethics" in his *Collected Essays*, vol. ix, especially pp. 79-84, and note 20. In these pages and in this note, their great author holds out for the inclusion of Conscience, in some vague way, in the evolutionary process as a whole; but he has demonstrated an antagonism that is fatal to the hypothesis.

<sup>2</sup> For one form of the argument here alluded to, see pp. 351-59, below.

is not an adult philosophy, but rather a philosophy that in the course of growth has suffered an arrest of development. The result of our inquiry here, in making this plain, goes far toward settling the issue between such philosophy and the Christian belief in personality. Does it not in fact settle it against evolutionism, and in favor of the older and higher view? Fulfilled philosophy vindicates our faith in the Personality of the Eternal Cause, in the reality of God, by vindicating the reality of man the Mind, and exhibiting his legislative relation to Nature and thence to evolution. It thus secures a stable footing for freedom, and for immortality with worth, and thereby for the existence of the Living God who is Love indeed, because the Inspirer of an endless progress in moral freedom.

Let men of science keep the method of

science within the limits of science; let their readers, at all events, beware to do so. Within these limits there is complete compatibility of science with religion, and forever will be. Let science say its untrammelled say upon man the physical, the physiological, or the experimentally psychological; upon man the body and man the sensory consciousness — these are all doubtless under the law of evolution issuing from man the Rational Soul. But let not science contrive its own destruction by venturing to lay profane hands, vain for explanation, on that sacred human nature which is its very spring and authorizing source. And let religion stay itself on the sovereignty of fulfilled philosophy, on man the Spirit, creative rather than created, who is himself the proximate source of evolution, the co-operating Cause and Lord of that world where evolution has its course.

## *Borden Parker Bowne* (1847-1910)

BOWNE was born in Leonardsville, New Jersey. He attended New York University as an undergraduate. In 1871 he began a two-year study at Halle and Goettingen, Germany. He came under the influence of Erdmann, Ulrichi, and especially Lotze, whose philosophy was a determining influence in Bowne's Personalism. After his return to the United States he followed journalism for a time. He was called to Boston University in 1876, and here he remained until his death in 1910. Like Howison, Bowne was a great and influential teacher. His work contributed profoundly to the maturing and liberalizing of theological thought within Methodism. He bequeathed to American culture a host of inspired religious teachers, ministers, and administrators, a number of prominent contemporary philosophers, and a vigorous school of thought.

### THE FAILURE OF IMPERSONALISM <sup>1</sup>

IMPERSONALISM might rightly be ruled out, on the warrant of our previous studies. We have seen that when our fundamental philosophic principles are impersonally and abstractly taken, they disappear either in contradiction or in empty verbalism. In all our thinking, when critically scrutinized, we find self-conscious and active intelligence the presupposition not only of our knowledge but of the world of objects as well. We might, then, rest our case and demand a verdict. Pedagogically, however, it seems better to continue the case. The naturalistic obsession is not easily overcome, and it takes time to form right habits of thinking, even when the truth is recognized. The present

lecture, then, is devoted to showing somewhat more in detail the shortcomings of impersonal philosophy.

Impersonalism may be reached in two ways. The sense-bound mind sees a great variety of extra-mental, impersonal things in the world about us, and these very naturally bulk large in thought. Thus things, with of course such modifications of the conception as a superficial reflection may suggest, tend to become the basal fact of existence. In this way naturalism arises, with its mechanical way of thinking and its materialistic and atheistic tendencies. This is one form of impersonalism.

The other form of impersonalism arises

<sup>1</sup> From *Personalism*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1908. Reprinted at Norwood, Massachusetts. Plimpton Press, 1936. Permission granted by Miss Ida T. Morrison.

through the fallacy of the abstract. Uncritical minds always attempt to explain the explanation, thus unwittingly committing themselves to the infinite regress. Accordingly when they come to living intelligence as the explanation of the world, they fancy that they must go behind even this. We have the categories of being, cause, identity, change, the absolute, and the like; and intelligence at best is only a specification or particular case of these more general principles. These principles, then, lie behind all personal or other existence, as its presupposition and source, and constitute a set of true first principles, from which all definite and concrete reality is derived by some sort of logical process or implication. This is a species of idealistic impersonalism. In its origin it is antipodal to naturalism, but in the outcome the two often coincide. Strauss said of the Hegelian idealism that the difference between it and materialism was only one of words; and this was certainly true of Hegelianism of the left wing.

These two forms of impersonalism we have now to consider, and we begin with naturalism.

As is the case with so many other terms, naturalism may have two meanings. It may be a principle of scientific method, and it may be a philosophic doctrine. In the former sense it is about identical with science itself, and is full of beneficence. By making the notion and fact of law prominent, it has given us control over the world and ourselves, and has freed the human mind from endless superstition and ignorance. Nature is no longer the seat of arbitrary caprice; and life no longer swarms with omens, portents, and devils. One must read at length in the history of humanity to recognize our debt to naturalism in this sense. We live in peace and sanity where our ancestors lived among dangerous and destructive obsessions, because a wise naturalism has displaced the false supernaturalism of earlier times. When, therefore, we speak of the failure of naturalism, we do not mean the failure of scientific naturalism, for this is one of humanity's best friends.

But philosophical naturalism is another thing. This is not a science, but a philosophy, and it has to be subjected to philosophical criticism in order to estimate its value. This general view is closely allied to common-sense realism, and is indeed but a kind of extension or refinement of it. As the untrained mind is naturally objective in its thinking, the things and bodies about us are taken for substantial realities as a matter of course, and they tend in advance of reflection to become the standard by which all else must be measured and to which all else must conform. Things that we can see and handle are the undeniable realities. About them there can be no question, but things invisible are, for common sense, doubtful; and as these things of sense experience by an easy generalization may be gathered under the one head, matter, and their activities ascribed to the one cause, force, matter and force come to be the supreme and basal realities of our objective experience. When their realm is extended, they often come to be viewed as the sole realities. But these realities are in space and time, which are looked upon as undoubted facts of a sort, and when they are combined with matter and force we get the fundamental factors of the scheme. Space and time furnish the scene; matter furnishes the existence; and force, manifesting itself in motion, furnishes the causality. These five factors constitute nature, and from them nature is to be construed and comprehended. Mr. Spencer presents them as the factors on which an interpretation of the world must rest, and according to him cosmic processes consist in an integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion. Here space and time are implied, matter and motion are expressed, and force, as the back-lying causality, is understood; and all interpretation of nature, it is said, must be in terms of these factors. This might be called the programme of philosophic naturalism. It aims to explain all the higher forms of experience, including life and society, in terms of matter and force working in space and time under the forms of motion. To what extent this is a coherent and consistent system we have now to consider, and for a time we shall limit our

inquiry to its explanation of the objective world of bodies, postponing any inquiry into its explanation of life and mind and society.

This system, as said, is allied in its beginnings with common-sense realism, and never gets entirely away from it. Whatever changes may be made in the common-sense view in the direction of transfigured realism, it still commonly holds on to the conception of an impersonal order of things; and even when it transforms things themselves into phenomena or processes, it still affirms the existence of energy under mechanical laws, producing a series of impersonal effects and moving from phase to phase according to the parallelogram of forces. It is an attempt to explain the world by impersonal and mechanical principles. Of course there is no suspicion that transfigured realism and phenomenalism are veritable Trojan horses for the theory.

This view was perfectly natural and almost necessary for spontaneous thought, when it became a little reflective and sought to unfold the implications of its crude sense metaphysics. But in this view we have a double abstraction. First, the objects of experience, which are given only in experience and which analysis shows are conceivable only as functions of intelligence, are abstracted from all relation to intellect as the veritable fact in itself which is later to explain intellect. This is as much as if one should abstract language from intelligence and then adduce language as the explanation of intelligence. The second abstraction is that even in experience itself only one aspect is fixed on, that of extension and motion, and this is supposed to be the real. All else is accidental and subordinate, but matter and motion are beyond any question. The world of qualities, all that gives life to experience, is ignored, and only the quantitative aspect is retained. But this is another product of fiction. There is no such world except among the abstractions of physicists. It is as little real as the forms of abstract mechanics by which we represent the relations of phenomena, without, however, pretending to reproduce the actual causality. Oddly enough, there is a strong idealistic factor in this naturalistic mechan-

ism. Looking at the moving atoms with critical eye, nothing but quantitative distinctions and relations are discovered to exist. Qualitative distinctions and relations are contributed by the spectator, and they are the chief part of the real problem. According to the theory, the fact would be a great multitude of elements falling apart and together according to the laws of motion, but then there is very much more than this in experience. Indeed, this is not experience at all. A mind which could completely grasp the moving elements as they are in themselves and not in the appearance, would miss the most important part in the system, that is, the whole world of sense qualities and distinctions, in the midst and enjoyment of which we live. Thus the most important part of experience is not explained at all, but is handed over to a kind of subjective experience somewhere in consciousness, while the theoretical explanation applies only to abstractions. Thus we invert the true order of fact. We discredit the real experience, or ignore it, and triumphantly solve an imaginary problem. As pointed out in a previous lecture, we are shut up by this way of thinking to transfigured realism and all its fictitious problems, with the result that the world we experience becomes more and more subjective, while the alleged real world becomes less and less accessible and less and less worth knowing. This result we reach quite apart from the phenomenality of the whole mechanical scheme as shown in Lecture III.

A further reflection on this view as it commonly appears in popular discussion is that on its own realistic ground it is throughout ambiguous. There are two entirely different types of explanation in logic, explanation by classification and explanation by causality; and naturalism oscillates confusedly between them. At times we are told that explanation consists entirely in discovering the uniformities of experience, and that the ultimate explanation must consist in discovering the most general uniformity of experience. At other times, however, the causal idea shuffles in and the attempt is made to explain by causality. We must consider both types in our criticism.



Explanation by classification always remains on the surface. Things are grouped together by means of some common factor of likeness, but we never get any insight into the inner nature of things in this way. Such explanation has only a formal convenience, but we never can reach causes or reasons by this road. We merely unite similar things in groups or series, and thus rescue them from their isolation and get a common name for them all. Such explanation merely drops out the differences of things and retains the point or points in which they are similar, and then regards that as their true explanation. How little this in itself helps us to insight is manifest upon reflection. We may gather all living things under the one head, organism, but in this case we simply find a common term for a multitude of things, which are not identified in any way by the classification, but simply brought under a simple head for purposes of logical convenience. Organism applies to every living thing whether animal or vegetable, spore or tree, microbe or elephant; and these differences, which are really the essential things in the case, are simply dropped out of sight, and we have the one term, organism, by which we are to understand the multitudinous plurality of living things. In the same way we may regard all objects as cases of matter and motion. But we get by such classification exceedingly little information. The generalization is so vague as to include all things at the expense of meaning practically nothing. We get very little valuable insight by classing all the products of human invention in the world as machines, or by classing all living organisms as integrations of matter and motion. It may be that they all come under the head of matter and motion in some aspects of their being, but even then we have no valuable information. It is, indeed, possible that some sciences would need to consider only the matter and motion aspect, just as a shoemaker might consider men only as shoe-wearing animals, and no harm would be done if this aspect were seen in its partial and superficial character. In some respects our human life is a case of matter and motion, and in some other respects it is not a

case of matter and motion. There may be matter and motion in connection with thought, but thought is not matter and motion.

If the naturalistic formula, then, confines itself simply to such classification, it is plain that it might be in a way true, and equally plain that it would be at best only a partial view and might be worthless, inasmuch as it would leave all the differences of things, which constitute their special peculiarities and the leading problem in dealing with them, out of consideration, and merely find their explanation in some one point in which they should agree. It would be scarcely more absurd if we should decide to explain all human bodies by the fact that they all had noses and ears, and should then leave out of consideration the multitudinous personal peculiarities whereby each is constituted a separate and incommunicable individual.

It is plain, then, that if the naturalistic explanation is to be of any use to us, it must go beyond these superficial generalities of classification, and must descend into the realm of causation, and also give account of the specific peculiarities or differentia of concrete things. And here difficulties begin to thicken.

Objects in space, large or small, can be pictured, and it seems at first as if the naturalistic view admitted of being really conceived. We can easily imagine a variety of bodies in space variously grouped and moving, and these bodies might conceivably be very small, so as to give us the molecules or atoms of theoretical physics. These also admit in a way of being pictured in their spatial relations or combinations; but when we come to add to these the notion of causality, so as to explain the order of spatial and temporal change, we find grave difficulties arising. With bodies of the kind described, the only thing we can explain is amorphous masses; that is, with bare lumps we can explain only heaps. Unless we assume a mover without, we must posit moving forces within; and unless these forces are under some structural law, they will explain only amorphous masses again. Simply pulling and pushing in a straight line, as central forces are supposed to do, make no provision for organization.

Assuming, then, the existence of such forces, we have a double order of facts, one of spatial change and one of a metaphysical nature. The former is a change among things; the latter is a change in things. The former depends on the latter. All substantial changes among things must be viewed as translations into phenomenal form of dynamic relations in things, and the spatial system can be understood only through the dynamic system. No spatial change explains itself or anything else until it is referred to a hidden dynamism. If we subtract a chemical element from a given molecule no one can see the slightest reason in that fact for the resulting chemical change, unless we assume a system of dynamic relations within the elements themselves which determines the form of their manifestation and interaction, and this system must be as complex and various as the phenomena themselves.

If we had a great mass of type no one would be dull enough to suppose that that would explain literature, even in its mechanical expression. It might indeed be said that literature in its mechanical form arises through the differentiation and integration of type; but while this would be true it would hardly pay expenses, for the work of the compositor cannot be done by polysyllabic words. But if we were determined to get along without the typesetter, we should have to endow the type with highly mysterious forces if they are to be equal to their task. Plain pushes and pulls would simply give us type in heaps or scattered about, as the pushes or pulls predominated, and this would not meet the case. We must have type which will pull and push themselves into the order demanded by the thought. Thus if the type were to set up *Paradise Lost*, they would have to be such that sundry type would come to the front and arrange themselves in the following order:

Of man's first disobedience and the fruit  
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste  
Brought death into our world and all our woe,  
Sing, heavenly muse.

The other type must likewise march to their proper positions in order to make up the

work. But in that case it is plain that the idea of the work is already immanent in the constitution of the type, otherwise we should be seeking to explain the orderly result by the chance jostlings of the type. That this is impossible everyone can see in the case of typesetting. Everyone sees here that the arrangement of the type is as much a part of the problem as their existence, and that the existence does not imply the arrangement. But if we insist on making the existence imply the arrangement, we must carry the arrangement into the existence in the form of "subtle tendencies" and "mysterious potentialities"; and these, in addition to being of exceedingly elusive meaning, do not illumine the problem at all, but rather darken it. To complete the parallel we must suppose that the type themselves were not originally given in their separate character, but only an indefinite, incoherent, unknowable homogeneity, which through continuous differentiations and integrations produced the type with all their specific characters and subtle tendencies and mysterious potentialities. This gives us an idea, on the naturalistic basis, of the necessity of a hidden dynamism for the explanation of spatial grouping and also of its unmanageable complexity.

This invisible dynamic system is overlooked altogether by spatial thought. Such thought has only the atoms and the void as data, and it can easily conceive the atoms as variously grouped within this void. The spatial imagination serves for this insight and nothing more is demanded; but when thought is clarified to the point of seeing the necessity of forming an unpicturable dynamism behind the system of spatial changes, then the dark impenetrability of our physical metaphysics begins to appear. Spatial combination we can picture; volitional causality we experience; but what that is which is less than the latter and more than the former is an exceedingly difficult problem. The fact is, we are simply using formal counters here, and are unable to tell whether there is anything whatever corresponding to them. We believe that there must be cause and ground, and then we suppose that the atoms themselves can be causes; but when we attempt to

think the matter through, then we soon find that we are applying the categories, as Kant would say, in a region where we have no experience, or rather no intuition. The result is, our thought may be in a way formally correct, but we have no assurance that it represents any actual fact whatever. This, then, shows first of all the dark unpicturability of naturalistic metaphysics from the dynamic side; and remembering the results of the discussion of the previous lecture, we find reason for saying that this metaphysics is entirely fictitious. It is an attempt to apply the notion of causality under circumstances, and in a form, which it is impossible for us to construe.

Can life and mind and morals and society be explained on a naturalistic basis? These questions were warmly debated in the last generation, but seldom understood. How naïve it all was, is manifest as soon as we look at the matter from a more critical standpoint. The space and time world of phenomena explains nothing; it is rather the problem itself. The real account of anything must be sought in the world of power; and this world eludes us altogether, unless we raise power to include intelligence and purpose. The unpicturable notions of the understanding, as substance, cause, unity, identity, etc., elude all spatial intuition, and vanish even from thought when impersonally taken. Concerning life and mind and man, it is permitted to look for all the uniformities we can find among their antecedents and concomitants, but this is only classification and reveals no causality. And any fairly clear-minded critic is willing to have anything whatever discovered in the space and time realm; for he knows that the only question of any real importance is that of causation. Those persons who expect to find matter to be the sufficient cause of life, and those who fear it may be, reveal thereby such profound ignorance of the true state of the problem that, while charity is called for, they merit no further consideration. Even if so-called spontaneous generation proved to be a fact, it would only mean that living things may arise under other phenomenal conditions than those that generally obtain;

it would not mean that "material causes" are able of themselves to produce living beings. The wonder would lie altogether in the phenomenal realm, and would leave the question of the power at work as obscure as ever. Thus as soon as we distinguish the question of classification and spatial arrangement from that of causality, we see how superficial naturalistic philosophy has been. Classification has passed for identification, phenomena have been made into things, and sequence has been mistaken for causality. This naïve confusion has made speculation very easy.

But supposing this dynamic difficulty in a way removed, we next meet another puzzle arising from overlooking the distinction between concrete and exhaustive thinking and symbolic or short-hand thinking. In other words, popular naturalism assumes that we have the simple physical elements in simple spatial relations, and that they are endowed with certain central forces of no very complex kind, but such that they admit of producing a great variety of complications, thus passing from the simple to the complex and from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous. Everyone will recall at this point the current formula of evolution, which claims to proceed from the like to the unlike, from the simple to the complex, from homogeneity to heterogeneity, through continuous differentiations and integrations. This difficulty is only a specification in detail of the tautology which inheres in every mechanical doctrine of causation, as pointed out in the last lecture.

This fancy is almost the sum of naturalistic philosophizing. If the infinite complexity of the concrete problem, in spite of all the simplifications and identifications of words, were seen, naturalism would lose all credit. The fancy in question is simply the fallacy of the universal, and rests upon mistaking the logical process for an ontological one, or from mistaking logical application for ontological implication. The class term applies to every member of the class, but it implies no one of them. Thus the term man applies to every human being, but it does not imply any living human being whatever. But this is overlooked by the speculator, and

he thinks it very possible to pass from complexity to simplicity, from heterogeneity to homogeneity, and in this way he succeeds in reaching some simple, almost contentless, terms, and these, which are really the last terms of logical abstraction, are supposed to be the first terms of real existence. Then these terms, because very simple and vague and indefinite in themselves, seem to raise no questions and excite no surprise. They may well, then, be taken as original starting points for world building and similar cosmological exploits. In this way, then, such abstractions as matter and force are reached, and they take the place of the physical elements, which are the only realities in the case. But in all this we simply forget the concrete facts. They remain as complex and multiform as ever. There is no simple thing, matter, and no simple fact, motion, to be distributed, but rather an indefinite number of moving things of various quantity and quality and in the most complex and mysterious dynamic relations. When we pass to the concrete we see the difference between the logical concept and the concrete reality, and we also see that logical simplification does not affect the reality at all. When, then, we replace the physical elements by the logical abstraction, matter, we do not reach anything indefinite or incoherent or homogeneous. Each of these elements has its own definite qualities definitely related in a definite system of definite law. There is no incoherency in the real system, and no progress toward greater coherency, except in relation to standards which we impose upon the system. If we take the solar system as a standard, we may call the nebulous period incoherent. If we take a solid body as a standard, we may call a gas incoherent. If we take a mature organism as a standard, we may call the embryo incoherent. But in all these cases the incoherency is relative to an assumed standard, and is non-existent for the underlying nature of things and the system of law. The homogeneity and heterogeneity, the coherence and incoherence, are relative to the speculator and his point of view, and in fact are but shadows of himself.

We may, then, admit the evolution for

mula as a description of the order in which things come along, such that the earlier forms were simple and homogeneous and the later forms more complex and differentiated; but we cannot admit that this represents any possible order of mechanical causality or any simplification of the concrete problem. We can never by classification reduce our problem to lower terms. If we begin with the complex no logic will enable us to escape into the simple on the impersonal plane, and if we begin with the simple we can never advance to the complex. Whatever we begin with, we are compelled to retain, however far back we may reason. The law of the sufficient reason compels us to find in the premises full and adequate preparation for the conclusion; and if the conclusion be complex, then there must be corresponding complexity in the premises. We may call it potential rather than actual, but all the same we are compelled to make our antecedents such that when they are exhaustively understood they are seen to contain, even to the minutest detail, all that will ever appear in the conclusion. The logical equivalence of cause and effect in any necessary scheme to which we referred in the last lecture makes this absolutely necessary, and hence makes it forever impossible to look upon the evolutionary doctrine as valid in causation. If we suppose a cause apart from the movement, which is successively manifesting a plan beginning with the early and simple forms and then proceeding to higher and more complex and differentiated forms, we can understand that by assimilating it to our own intellectual life; but apart from that the doctrine is absolutely impossible. We are compelled on the impersonal plane to assume everything either actually or potentially at the beginning, or, if there was no beginning, then to assume it from everlasting.

The two conceptions of evolution, evolution as a description of the phenomenal order and evolution as a doctrine of causation, have never been sufficiently distinguished by the rank and file of speculators in this field. They have taken the phenomenal order for the causal order, and have seldom raised the question as to what their evolution really

means and what its conditions may be. Accordingly we have the proposition to evolve the atoms, with all the familiar formulas about passing from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous, etc. Nowadays that the supposedly fixed elements seem to be combinations of something simpler, this attempt is frequently met with. It is suggested that the atoms of those substances which lie in the same chemical group are perhaps built up from the same ions, or at least from ions which possess the same mass and electric charge, and that the differences which exist in the materials thus constituted arise more from the manner of the association of the ions in the atom than from differences in the fundamental character of the ions which build up the atoms. Well, here we have the same thing — the attempt to explain qualitative by quantitative difference, and the same failure to inquire what the attempt really presupposes.

If we should conceive a half-dozen bricks placed one at each angle of a pentagon and one at the centre, and should then conceive an additional brick added so as to have one at each angle of a hexagon and one at the centre, we see no reason whatever for any particular change of quality of the combination arising from the addition of the new brick. And that is all that bare quantity can do. No variations of quantity contain any explanation of qualitative change, unless we assume a qualitative system in connection with the quantity. We can add elements to atomic groups or subtract them; but unless the elements themselves stand in definite dynamic relations which imply particular groups and qualities, to the exclusion of other groups and qualities, we cannot deal with the problem at all. If the atoms are not in such relations, the problem is of course insoluble; and if they are in such relations, we assume the fact to be explained from the start. It is then conceivable that our present elements might be analyzed into other elements which might be called simpler, but the thing which is not possible is by such an analysis to escape from the complexity of the existing system, because we should have to trace into those antecedents which are to produce the present

complexity and difference the same complexity and difference in one form or another.

Moreover, in thinking the matter through we should have to inquire whether evolution as such assumes anything or not. Does it begin with something vague, formless, and lawless, or does it begin with a definite system and reign of law, so that everything is determined in its place and relation? In the former case we can take no step whatever in the way of understanding anything. It would be simply the notion of pure being, which is nothing, and which, if it were anything, could never be used for the understanding of experience. But if we begin with a definite system of law, in which all the factors are subject to the reign of law, then it is plain we never can introduce anything new into the system, for everything is determined from the beginning; and if there was no beginning, everything was determined from everlasting. In any mechanical system, under the law of the logical equivalence of cause and effect, it is forever impossible to make new departures or to reach anything essentially new. We can only oscillate between the present actuality and the past potentiality, potentializing the present as we go back in our thought, and actualizing the potentiality as we come forward in our thought, but always so that potential plus actual must remain a constant quantity. In popular thought about this matter there is a continual oscillation, for the most part unsuspected, between the two points of view. We try to explain everything by antecedents, and so by the aid of the fallacy of the universal as we go backward we succeed in reaching to our satisfaction some indefinite, incoherent homogeneity. But logic forthwith shows the emptiness of this notion and the impossibility of reaching it. Then we begin again, mindful this time of the reign of law, and assume an order of law, and then fail to notice that as soon as we do that, on the impersonal plane we have determined everything for all future time, so that nothing new may hereafter be introduced without some irruption from without. No new departures are possible in a mechanical scheme.

The same difficulty appears when we work

the question forward instead of backward. Here again the naturalistic speculator has commonly been under the influence of sense bondage and has tacitly assumed that what he could not see was not there, so that differences which did not manifest themselves to the senses might be regarded as non-existent. But the same law which we have been referring to makes it clear that no developing thing can ever be understood or defined by what it momentarily is, but only by all that which it is to become. It can be explained, then, not by reference to its crude beginnings, but only by reference to the finished outcome. Aristotle reached this insight two thousand years ago. When, then, the biological speculator tells us, as if it were a very conclusive fact, that the embryos of many of the higher animals look alike in their earliest stages, we are not so much impressed as perhaps we are expected to be; for, however much things may look alike, if they are under different laws of development they are, to the eye of reason, even in the earliest phases, unlike with all the unlikenesses that later appear. The human embryo, when it is undistinguishable by sight from the embryo of a dog or sheep, is after all a human embryo, and not the embryo of a sheep. It is already under the law of human development, and when it quickly passes into the human form this is not something adventitiously taken on through some verbal hocus-pocus about differentiation and integration, but is simply the manifestation of the immanent organic laws under which it holds its existence and its development takes place.

The whole question of the transformation of species has been equally confused in naturalistic discussion. There are really two questions to be considered. One is, Can existing organic forms be genetically traced to earlier forms so that the lines of descent as we go backward converge to some common origin, as the branches of a tree all meet in a common trunk? The other question is, What are the individual things themselves, and what is the power that produces them? The former question belongs to science, the latter belongs to philosophy.

The former question has only a subordinate interest, and philosophy is content to have the answer fall out as it may, provided fact and logic be duly regarded. Its supposed importance is due to the implicit assumption of a self-running nature which does a great many unintended things on its own account, and to the fancy that such genetic connection would mean identity of nature in the successive members of the series.

The second question is the only one of any real importance. In considering it we must first note the nominalism of the doctrine of descent.

A species as such is nothing but a group of individuals which more or less closely resemble one another. In the case of the more prominent living species we should probably add the notion of genetic connection, but this would in no way affect the nominalism of the doctrine. If, then, the so-called transformation of species took place, the objective fact, apart from our logical manipulation, would be this: If individuals were taken from points widely apart in a line of descent, they would be so unlike that we should not class them together. But this would not identify individuals, or higher and lower forms. The fact would be a power producing individuals in such a way that they could be variously classified, possibly on an ascending scale and in adaptation to higher and fuller life. In that case we should have the familiar progress from the simple to the complex, from the low to the high, and all the rest; but it would be entirely free from all those fearsome identifications of man with the monkey, etc., which have so infested the popular imagination. For one holding the phenomenality of nature and the volitional character of all so-called natural causality, there is nothing to excite alarm in any permissible doctrine of the transformation of species.

We find naturalism, then, entirely in its right when it seeks to give a description of the phenomenal order according to which things have appeared, but we find it as a philosophy exceedingly superficial and uncritical. Apart from the critical doubts which we have discovered in the previous lecture respecting mechanical causality in

general, and the necessity of lifting the problem of causation to the personal plane in order to keep it from vanishing in the Heraclitic flux, we find that this doctrine vanishes in complete and barren tautology as soon as we take it concretely and exhaustively, instead of symbolically and in a shorthand way. This way of thinking is compelled to carry the present into the past, or into its machinery of whatever sort, in such a way as to empty it of all progress of any kind. When, then, in such a scheme we make a cross-section of the cosmic flow or any part of it anywhere, we are compelled to find potentially or actually present all that ever will be; and if we choose to carry the regress never so far back, the same necessity attends us; and if at last we reach some nebulous period of dispersed matter or a fiery cloud, even there, when we look around upon the situation with our eyes open, we are compelled to find latent and potential all that will ever emerge in all the future through which the system may endure. In addition, when naturalism becomes mathematical and seeks to reduce all qualitative distinctions to quantitative ones, it leaves the real world altogether, and becomes a pure abstraction like the world of abstract mechanics. Like that world, it has only representative value, and is never to be mistaken for the world of real existence.

These are the leading difficulties of naturalism as a philosophy. There are numberless difficulties of detail, but into these we forbear to enter. The doctrine is sufficiently convicted and judged by its doctrine of causality, and the hopeless tautology and endless regress to which it is condemned, and also by the impossibility of verifying as actual any of its leading conceptions. They must forever remain, at best, mere conceptual forms, to which no reality can be shown to correspond.

Naturalism may be dismissed as a failure. It remains to show that impersonalism as idealism is equally so. When we approach the metaphysical problem from the side of knowledge, it is easy to overlook the fact of will and causality in existence, and conclude that things are only ideas. And then, since the mind also is an object of knowledge, it is easy in the same way to reach the conclusion

that it too is only an idea or group of ideas. The next thing is to eliminate the personal implication from these ideas, and then we forthwith reach the conclusion that the mind itself is a function of impersonal ideas. Thus impersonalism is once more installed.

It is easy to see how this view arises. The epistemological interest makes us unwilling to admit anything that cannot be conceptually grasped. Accordingly it seeks to make ideas all-embracing. At the same time it is clear that this view is a tissue of abstractions. The impersonal idea is a pure fiction. All actual ideas are owned, or belong to someone, and mean nothing as floating free. We have already seen that the various categories of thought, apart from their formal character as modes of intellectual procedure, get any real significance only in the concrete and self-conscious life of the living mind. Apart from this, when considered as real they become self-destructive or contradictory. The idealism of the type we are now considering assumes that these categories admit of being conceived in themselves, and that they are in a measure the preconditions of concrete existence, and in such a way that we might almost suppose that a personal being is compounded of being plus unity plus identity plus causality, etc. Thus personal existence appears as the outcome and product of something more ultimate and fundamental. The fictitious nature of this view has already appeared. When we ask what we mean by any of these categories, it turns out, as we have seen, that we mean the significance we find them to have in our self-conscious life. In the concrete the terms have no meaning except as it is abstracted from our own personal experience. The only unity we know anything about, apart from the formal unities of logic, is the unity of the unitary self; and the only identity we know anything about is no abstract continuity of existence through an abstract time, it is simply the self-equality of intelligence throughout its experience. And the change which we find is not an abstract change running off in an abstract time, but is simply the successive form under which the self-equal intelligence realizes its purpose and projects the realizing activity against



the background of its self-consciousness. Similarly for being itself; in the concrete it means the passing object of perception, or else it means existence like our own.

So much for the nature of the categories. But still graver difficulties arise when we inquire concerning the place of their existence and the ground of their combination and movement. If we suppose them to precede personality, we must ask where they exist. The only intelligent answer that can be given would be that they exist either in space and time, or in consciousness. The former supposition would turn them into things, and then they would dissolve away in the dialectic of spatial and temporal existence; the latter is contrary to the hypothesis, which is that they are preconditions of consciousness. Thus they retreat into some kind of metaphysical *n*th dimension, where we cannot follow them because they mean nothing.

A further difficulty emerges when we ask for the ground of grouping and movement of these ideas. If we conceive their relations to be purely logical we should make immediate speculative shipwreck. The intellect conceived of as merely a set of logical relations is totally incapable of explaining the order of experience, for logic is non-temporal. Conclusions coexist with the premises. There is no before or after possible in the case. If, then, the universe as existing were a logical implication of ideas, it and all its contents would be as eternal as the ideas. There would be no room for change, but all their implications would rigidly coexist. In this view also finite minds, with all their contents, as implications of eternal ideas, would be equally eternal, and as error and evil are a manifest part of these contents, it follows that they likewise are necessary and eternal. Hence we should have to admit an element of unreason and evil in the eternal ideas themselves, and by this time the collapse of the system would be complete. There is no escape from this result so long as we look upon the intellect as a logical mechanism of ideas. Only a living, active, personal intelligence can escape this fatalism and suicidal outcome of the impersonal reason. A purely logical and contemplative intellect

that merely gazed upon the relations of ideas, without choice and initiative and active self-direction, would be absolutely useless in explaining the order of life.

The claim that thought must comprise everything is itself unclear in its meaning. In our human thinking of course there is a world of objects which we do not make but find, and this dualism can never be eliminated from our thinking. But this world of objects is retained within the thought sphere by being made the product and expression of intelligence, and as such it is open to apprehension and comprehension by intelligence. But when it comes to the self-knowledge of intelligence, there is always an element which mere conceptual knowing can never adequately grasp. We have seen that concepts without immediate experience are only empty forms, and become real only as some actual experience furnishes them with real contents. Hence there is an element in self-knowledge beyond what the conceptions of the understanding can furnish. This is found in our living self-consciousness. We conceive some things, but we not only conceive, we also live ourselves. This living indeed cannot be realized without the conception, but the conception is formal and empty without the living. In this sense intelligence must accept itself as a datum, and yet not as something given from without, but as the self-recognition of itself by itself. Intelligence must always have a content for its own recognition. The recognition would be impossible without the content, and the content would be nothing without the recognition. In this fact the antithesis of thought and being finds recognition and reconciliation, but the fact itself must be lived, it cannot be discursively construed. Thought and act are one in this matter, and neither can be construed without the other.

In closing this discussion we recall once more our doctrine of transcendental empiricism. The meaning and possibility of these terms must finally be found in experience itself, and not in any abstract philosophizing. When the terms are abstractly taken without continual reference to experience, it is easy to develop any number of difficulties and even



contradictions in our fundamental ideas. No better proof of this can be found than Mr. Bradley's work on Appearance and Reality. This is a work of great ability, but written from the abstract standpoint. The result is that it might almost be called a refutation of impersonalism, although such refutation was far enough from Mr. Bradley's purpose. He finds all the categories and relations of thought abounding in contradiction. Inherence, predication, quality, identity, causality, unity, space, time, things, and even the self, swarm with contradictions. Mr. Bradley seems to think that these difficulties are all removed in the absolute, but he fails to see that his logic would pursue him even into the absolute, unless it be personally conceived. Otherwise the absolute is simply a *deus ex machina* kept strictly behind the scenes, and worked only by stage direction from the manager.

But the difficulties urged by Mr. Bradley do exist for all impersonal philosophy; and they can be removed only as the problem is raised to the personal plane, and we take the terms in the meaning they have in living experience. Thus identity is entirely intelligible as the self-identification of experience in intelligence. We can easily give identity a meaning according to which the soul is not identical, but there is no loss in this, as we have no interest speculative or practical in such identity. Again, unity is entirely intelligible as the unity of the self in the plurality of its activities. Here again it is easy to define unity in such a way as to exclude plurality; but here also nothing is lost, for we have no interest of any sort in such a unity. The same may be said of the other categories. They may easily be defined in such a way as to involve contradictions or make them worthless, but philosophy is not concerned over the fact of such abstractions; it cares only to know the forms the categories take on in living experience. And here we find, as we pointed out in discussing freedom, that many things which when abstractly taken seem contradictory prove quite compatible in the concrete.

Finally, the notion of the self can easily be taken in such a way as to be worthless.

We are asked of what use the self is, after all, in explaining the mental life. How does its unity explain the plurality and variety of consciousness? And the answer must be that in some sense it does not explain it, and yet the unity is no less necessary. For the consciousness of plurality is demonstrably impossible without the fact of conscious unity. This unity does not indeed enable us to deduce plurality, and hence the plurality must be viewed as an aspect of the unity, but not as an aspect of an abstract unity without distinction or difference, but a living, conscious unity, which is one in its manifoldness and manifold in its oneness. Taken verbally this might easily be shown to be contradictory, but taken concretely it is the fact of consciousness, and none the less so because our formal and discursive thought finds it impossible to construe it. And in general the self taken abstractly is indeed worthless, as all causes are on the impersonal plane. The law of the sufficient reason, which is supposed to demand causation, always shuts us up to barren tautology when impersonally taken. In such cases all our explanations only repeat the problem. But the self is not to be abstractly taken. It is the living self in the midst of its experiences, possessing, directing, controlling both itself and them; and this self is not open to the objection of barrenness and worthlessness, being simply what we all experience when we say me or mine. This self can never be more than verbally denied, and even its verbal deniers have always retained the fact. The language of the personal life would be impossible otherwise.

On all of these accounts, then, we affirm that impersonalism is a failure whether in the low form of materialistic mechanism or in the abstract form of idealistic notions, and that personality is the real and only principle of philosophy which will enable us to take any rational step whatever. We are not abstract intellects nor abstract wills, but we are living persons, knowing and feeling and having various interests, and in the light of knowledge and under the impulse of our interests trying to find our way, having an order of experience also and seeking to

understand it and to guide ourselves so as to extend or enrich that experience, and thus to build ourselves into larger and fuller and more abundant personal life.

The metaphysics of impersonalism is certainly impossible, but it may be objected that personalism itself is open to at least equal objection. Some of these have become traditional and conventional, and seem to call for a word in passing.

In cruder thought the attempt is always made to solve the problem by picturing, and this ends by confounding the person with the physical organism. Of course it is easy to show that personality as thus conceived is impossible. The more significant objections arise from an abstract treatment of the subject and an attempt to construe personality as the outcome of impersonal principles. But abstraction can do nothing with the question, as the indications of living experience are the only source of knowledge in this matter. Personality can never be construed as a product or compound; it can only be experienced as a fact. It must be possible because it is given as actual. Whenever we attempt to go behind this fact we are trying to explain the explanation. We explain the objects before the mirror by the images which seem to exist behind it. *There is nothing behind the mirror.* When we have lived and described the personal life we have done all that is possible in sane and sober speculation. If we try to do more we only fall a prey to abstractions. This self-conscious existence is the truly ultimate fact.

Of course our human existence, with its various limitations and its temporal form, readily lends itself to the thought that personality develops out of the impersonal. If we should allow this to be the fact in our own case, we should still have to admit that the impersonal out of which our personality develops has already a coefficient of personality as the condition of the development. The essentially impersonal can never by any logical process other than verbal hocus-pocus, which is not logical after all, be made the sufficient reason for a personal development.

But our existence does not really abut on, or spring out of, an impersonal background; it rather depends on the living will and purpose of the Creator. And its successive phases, so far as we may use temporal language, are but the form under which the Supreme Person produces and maintains the personal finite spirit.

The objections to affirming a Supreme Person are largely verbal. Many of them are directed against a literal anthropomorphism. This, of course, is a man of straw. Man himself in his essential personality is as unpicturable and formless as God. Personality and corporeality are incommensurable ideas. The essential meaning of personality is selfhood, self-consciousness, self-control, and the power to know. These elements have no corporeal significance or limitations. Any being, finite or infinite, which has knowledge and self-consciousness and self-control, is personal; for the term has no other meaning. Laying aside, then, all thought of corporeal form and limitation as being no factor of personality, we must really say that complete and perfect personality can be found only in the Infinite and Absolute Being, as only in Him can we find that complete and perfect selfhood and self-possession which are necessary to the fullness of personality. In thinking, then, of the Supreme Person we must beware of transferring to him the limitations and accidents of our human personality, which are no necessary part of the notion of personality, and think only of the fullness of power, knowledge, and selfhood which alone are the essential factors of the conception.

Thus impersonalism appears as doubly a failure. If we ask for the positive foundation of its basal conceptions, we find that there is none. They are empty forms of thought to which no reality can be shown to correspond, and upon criticism they vanish altogether. If we next ask what insight impersonalism gives into the problems of experience, we find nothing but tautology and infinite regress. Such a theory surely does not pay expenses. The alternative is personalism or nothing.

# James Edwin Creighton

(1861-1924)

THE early training of Creighton was in the school of his native province in Nova Scotia. At twenty-two he entered Dalhousie College in Halifax. He there came under the influence of Jacob Gould Schurman. When Schurman was called to Cornell University in 1886 Creighton followed the next year to pursue his studies with him. In 1888 he went abroad to study at Leipzig and Berlin. Upon his return to America he became instructor at Cornell University. He began his long association with the Sage School of Philosophy in 1895. With Schurman he became co-founder in 1893 and co-editor of the *Philosophical Review*, and from 1902 he was editor-in-chief. From 1896 to 1924 he was American editor of the *Kant Studien*. He played a leading part in founding the American Philosophical Association (1902-03) and was its first president. His influence upon American thought was as an editor and critic rather than as a systematic philosopher. After his death a volume of Creighton's most representative essays appeared under the editorship of Harold R. Smart, entitled *Studies in Speculative Philosophy*.

## TWO TYPES OF IDEALISM<sup>1</sup>

For a decade or more Idealists have been so occupied in defending their position against attacks delivered by Pragmatists, Neo-Realists, and others that they have had little opportunity of examining in detail their own doctrine, or of attempting to settle their own family quarrels. Criticism of idealism from other schools has served to unite under a common flag philosophical thinkers who are by no means at one either in their presuppositions and method, or in the general character of their results. The grouping of "mental-

ists" and panpsychists under a common label with the exponents of speculative idealism, however explicable historically, has led to much confusion and fruitless controversy. Indeed, there is no better illustration at the present day of the hypnotic power of a label than that afforded by the inability of some recent critics of idealism to distinguish in principle between the different forms of doctrine to which this name is applied. It seems to these critics impossible to disturb their fixed systems of classification.<sup>2</sup> Per-

<sup>1</sup> This article is based on a paper read before the Philosophical Club of Yale University. A number of changes have been made in the revision of the manuscript. Reprinted from the *Philosophical Review*, vol. xxvi, no. 5, pp. 514-36, September, 1917, with the permission of the editors.

<sup>2</sup> The difficulty of getting beyond labels in the discussion of philosophical problems recalls once more Bacon's statement: "Men believe that their reason governs words; but it is also true that words react on the understanding; and this it is that has rendered philosophy and the sciences sophistical and inactive." — *Novum Organum*, Book I, 60.

haps feeling that an incurable ambiguity attaches to the word "idealism," Professor Bosanquet has repudiated that name for himself and seems to suggest that the name should no longer be used to denote the speculative doctrine which derives from the great writers of the past, but that to describe this the term "speculative philosophy" should be employed.<sup>1</sup> This is a proposal that deserved careful consideration. Even if traditional idealism may not be willing to abandon altogether its historical name, it is none the less essential that it should separate itself sharply from what may be called the hybrid forms which claim alliance with it. And this separation should be thoroughgoing and final, not something perfunctory and formal which still makes possible and sanctions mutual borrowings and accommodations. Traditional idealism, if it is to maintain itself as genuinely "speculative philosophy," must discard and disclaim the subjective categories assumed by the modern "way of ideas" which is most frequently connected with the name of Berkeley. Idealists of this school ought not to allow their affection for "the good Berkeley" to deter them from repudiating all alliance with his philosophical doctrines. Moreover, if this speculative idealism is to be defended and developed, it must rid itself of the ambiguities and restrictions that have resulted from its association with "mentalism," and that seem to make it a doctrine remote from the movements of science and the interests of practical life. By thus repudiating the unnatural alliance with the doctrine of "mental states" speculative idealism will give evidence, not of weakness or vacillation, but of its vitality and steadfastness in maintaining the continuity of its historical position. At the same time it will strengthen its position by removing the chief grounds of misunderstanding and criticism from without.

In order to prepare the way for the distinction which it is essential to make between the two types of philosophy which are confused under the name of idealism, we may ask what is the characteristic of thought that is "speculative" as opposed to thinking that claims for itself the title of "realistic"? The endeavor of speculation, as Bergson has well remarked, is to *see*, i.e., to appreciate and understand; while that of realistic thinking is to *construe*, i.e., to show how the thing is made. I think it is possible to show historically that the characteristic mark of idealism, as it is found in the great systems, is its direct acceptance of things as having value or significance. The mind refuses, as it were, to allow anything to intervene between it and its object, to set up any bare existence, or isolated entity, as the "cause" or "element" in terms of which its own direct experience of a significant world is to be explained. Or we may say that it refuses to abstract from value, that it holds fast to the unity of existence and significance. Its primary insight, which reflection has formulated as its principle, is that the reality known in experience is not something that merely "is" or possesses bare existence, but that, as existing concretely, it forms part of a permanent system of relations and values.<sup>2</sup> Historical idealism is thus opposed in principle to what we may call atomic realism. When the latter view is consistent with itself, it is forced to the conclusion that all relations are external, and that all significance and meaning are secondary and derivative, imposed upon the universe by the subjective mind. For it is obvious that if the objective world is simply an aggregation of existences, in themselves devoid of meaning, the value and significance that is popularly ascribed to things when experienced really cannot belong to the things themselves, but must be taken as indicating the way in which they affect the mind

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophical Review*, vol. xxvii, p. 6. Cf. also *ibid.*, p. 268, footnote. While I have of course no right to make Professor Bosanquet responsible for the views here expressed, my obligations to his writings will be apparent in several passages where no specific reference is given.

<sup>2</sup> That the standpoint of value is more concrete than that of existence is evident from the fact that it includes the latter as a necessary moment in itself. On the other hand, there is no road to significance if one begins with bare existences: no path from given entities, whether physical or mental, to a real world, to real knowledge, or to judgments of value of any kind.

through their influence upon the bodily organism.

In opposition, then, to types of thought which may be denominated "realistic," and which seek to exhibit the construction of the concrete world from certain hypothetical elements, speculative idealism may be said to be characterized by the conscious effort to understand things as they are: to see together things and their relations, reality in its concrete significance, without feeling the need of going behind this insight to explain, as it were, how reality is made.

On the other hand, the second type of thought to which the name "idealism" is applied in common usage — what I have called "mentalism," and what might perhaps be denominated psychological or existential idealism — is essentially "realistic" in character, judged by the distinctions already laid down. Its claim to the title "idealism" comes from the fact that it asserts everything to be mental in character — of the content of mind, or of the substance of mind. But though idealistic in name, it fails to realize, wholly or in part, the speculative principle which distinguishes genuine idealism. Instead of accepting the intuition of objective reality, and of seeking to penetrate into this through reflection, this type of thought proceeds dogmatically to transform experience into an order of existing ideas, to elaborate a theory of active substances and passive ideas as the machinery through which it is to be understood. In this process of transformation, both the mind and its objects become modes of existence, and the relation between them is conceived as external and mechanical. The external order of things as conceived by physical science is simply asserted to be a psychological order; but instead thereby becoming "ideal" these things remain "dead, inert, and passive" as before; — existences, not meanings in a concrete world of meanings.

It is here, I think, that the clear line of separation is found between those calling themselves idealists: the question is whether it is necessary to "validate" experience by constructing it in terms of particular existences. The psychological or existential ideal-

ist feels the necessity of doing this. Even when defending the basal categories of experience, such as "significance" and "the Ego," he hesitates to take these speculatively in their universality, but turns again to reduce them to a particular form of psychical existence, assuming that they can be validated and made secure only when they are based upon some psychological "feeling of value" or "feeling of the Ego." It is indeed necessary to avoid abstractions and not follow categories which do not exhibit their concrete operation and vitality in experience; but it is to the form and content of experience as a whole we must look for the justification of our categories. To assume that to be real the ideal category must be "given," or that there must be "given" some particular feeling or impression "corresponding to it" (as Kant sometimes maintained) is of course to stick in the category of existence, and consequently to render it impossible to comprehend experience at all as a system of developing meanings.

I have purposely refrained from attempting to illustrate the limitations of existential categories by reference to the views of contemporary idealistic writers. It seems safer to choose illustrations from historical doctrines than from the utterances of philosophers of the present day. The example of psychological idealism or "mentalism" that comes most readily to mind is the system of Berkeley. In spite of occasional passages which seem capable of a different interpretation, there can be no doubt that, in the earlier form of his philosophy at least, Berkeley regards experience as a collection of ideas, and each idea as a particular mode of existence, being nothing else than that which at the moment it is perceived to be. Again, he is no less insistent than Hume that ideas are in their very nature distinct and separate from one another, and that there are no necessary relations between them, but that the system of relations in virtue of which certain ideas become signs of other ideas is arbitrary and learned through experience, though the connection between them in what we call the order of nature is divinely established and independent of the will of any finite being.

It is clear that Berkeley's thinking takes place on the plane of existence, and in terms of existing entities and their relations. In other words, the outer order of things has simply been carried over into the mind, and represented there in terms of sensations, which are themselves regarded as particular modes of existence. There is, then, in all this no real approach to genuine idealism. To transfer things into the mind, to call them inner rather than outer, does not supply philosophy with a new principle. For the most part Berkeley, and those who have followed him, have continued to operate with the old realistic categories, and to conceive of the mind and the nature of experience in terms as mechanical as those employed by materialists.

When we come to Kant the case is not so clear. On the one hand, Kant appears to be explaining how experience is made; how beginning with the disconnected particulars of inner representations, the mind reaches a standpoint of universal objective truth by uniting, through its own synthetic principles, the existing psychical data furnished by sensation. But with all his pains in this undertaking he is unable to reach real universality, or genuine objectivity. The inner representations are joined together in an order which is said to possess strict universality and necessity, but yet they do not cease to be regarded as maintaining the character of existing mental images, not themselves really transformed into universals, though caught as it were in the web of universal categories. Moreover, this experience, which is described as constructed through transcendental machinery, never attains to objectivity in the full sense. It remains to the end a system of *Vorstellungen*, with a certificate of universal validity according to the necessary laws of the understanding indeed, but yet with the disconcerting limitation stamped upon this certificate that experience is only valid of phenomena, and must always be contrasted with the unattainable ideal of a knowledge of things-in-themselves.

But on the other hand, as has often been pointed out, there is another side to Kant's philosophy which approaches the problem of

experience from a different point of view and at least suggests how the difficulties and limitations which I have mentioned may be overcome. This interpretation of Kant is worked out with great detail by Edward Caird in his epoch-making work on the Critical Philosophy. The question of the historical justification for Caird's interpretation is not one which it is now possible to discuss. Whatever conclusion be maintained on this point, however, it remains true that the philosophy of Kant is still very generally identified with the task of bringing order and coherence into a series of unrelated sensations. Accordingly, many of those idealists whose teacher has been Kant, as well as those whose doctrine has been derived in the first place from Berkeley, continue to think of experience in terms of states of consciousness, or mental existences, and thus fail to arrive at a genuinely speculative view of knowledge and of reality.

For those who approach the problems of philosophy from this point of view, Idealism is committed to the doctrine that material objects, at least so far as they can be known in experience, are real only as existent states of consciousness. The outer order is not accepted frankly for what it is, but is construed as the development or synthesis of some more primary inner order of facts, sensations, or internal purposes. In order to be known, the objective order must be reduced to conscious states: "What do we ever know but our ideas?" The assumption in this form of procedure appears to be that it is necessary, in order to make experience intelligible, to reduce objects to terms of mind, to interpret minds and material things as literally identical modes of existences.

Now, as it is obviously impossible to reduce material things to states of consciousness in an individual mind, it is common for adherents of this view to suppose that the difficulty may be met by postulating an Absolute mind as the vast receptacle, as it were, in which things exist in the form of ideas. But it is surely clear that so long as the existential categories are not transcended, so long as the Absolute mind is still conceived as a magnified or extended psychological con-

sciousness, the whole assumption is not only arbitrary, but remains useless as a guarantee of significance and objectivity. On the one hand, things are not rendered a whit more "ideal" by thinking of them as states of consciousness of an Absolute mind. Moreover, so long as this Absolute mind is conceived after the analogy of an existing psychological consciousness, as a series or even a *totum simul* of states of mind, it has no principle of connection with objective experience. Absolute idealism of this type is just as much subjective as the view which reduces things to states in the consciousness of a finite individual, and is open to all the objections which are brought against the latter theory. To assert that things exist as elements in an Absolute experience is then in itself only an appeal to a mechanical device which explains nothing, and is in addition unmeaning and arbitrary.

The fundamental postulate of this form of idealism, as we have already seen, is that *the object must be reduced to terms of the mind*. The mind can know only that which is itself, or is within itself. As it is sometimes expressed, reality must either be itself made up of minds, or exist as a state of some mind. The former view, that reality is at bottom a collection or system of psychical beings, is maintained by many writers as a means of uniting Idealism with Pluralism. To merge reality in an Absolute mind seems to them to lead to insuperable difficulties, and these they usually regard as one of the necessary results of all forms of Monism. These difficulties they try to escape by maintaining some form of panpsychic doctrine, that reality is composed of a plurality of minds. But if these "minds" are still conceived as bare "existences," the difficulty reappears of how isolated particulars are to be given any content, or to be combined into a system or order of reality. I am not here attempting to refute panpsychism, or arguing against all forms of Pluralism; but I merely wish to point out that Pluralism may, and I think often does, limit itself to what I have called the existential view of Idealism, proceeding like the existential idealists, who support themselves upon the Absolute mind, on the assumption

that all reality must be reduced to a single form or mode of existence.

It would obviously be impossible to maintain that the idealism which has been presented by contemporary writers has in all cases failed to transcend the category of existence. Of a considerable number of the best-known representatives of this doctrine such a statement would be obviously false. But it is at least true that its critics have as a rule failed to understand it in any other sense, and I think that a good many idealists have given ground for the misunderstanding by failing to take and maintain from the beginning a standpoint that is objective and genuinely speculative. To attempt to justify this statement by referring to particular authors and citing quotations would probably lead to disagreements in interpretation, and besides take more time than I have at my disposal. It is better to pass on and attempt to indicate the standpoint and method of objective or speculative idealism, which I think both the history of philosophy and the authority of contemporary writers justify us in regarding as the more adequate and complete form of this doctrine.

The standpoint of this mode of philosophizing is that of experience,\* as this has been developed and defined by the reflection of the past. It does not claim to have made any new discovery. It does not occupy itself with bemoaning or exposing the errors or shortcomings of the classical representatives of philosophy, but does devote much careful study to an attempt to understand them. By reflecting upon the past in the light of the thought of the present day, and of the problems of the present day in the light of the intellectual achievements of the past, it tries to gain insight as to what problems are genuine and how these can best be formulated. It thus is enabled to develop a basis for criticism and to continue the tradition of the older philosophical systems, even while discarding and modifying the older categories and statement of problems.

This historical speculative idealism, as occupying the standpoint of experience, has never separated the mind from the external

order of nature. It knows no egocentric predicament, because it recognizes no ego "alone with its states," standing apart from the order of nature and from a society of other minds. It thus dismisses as unmeaning those problems which are sometimes called "epistemological," as to how the mind as such can know reality as such. Without any epistemological grace before meat it falls to work to philosophize, assuming, naïvely if you please, that the mind by its very nature is already in touch with reality. Instead, that is, of assuming that there is an entity called mind, and another entity having no organic relation to mind called nature, it assumes on the basis of experience that these realities are not sundered and opposed, but are in very being and essence related and complementary. The relation or rather system of relations that constitute the bond between what we call mind and that which is termed nature it takes not as external and accidental, as if each of these could be real outside of this system, but rather as internal, essential, and constitutive. We can think of a mind apart from an objective order only through an abstraction: to be a mind at all it is necessary to be in active commerce with a world which is more than an order of ideas. If it is said that this is mere assumption, and not proof, I reply that this is the universal assumption upon which all experience and all science proceeds. It needs no proof because it is the standpoint of experience itself. That it is the nature of the mind to know, is a proposition that it is impossible seriously to call in question. But even if this is granted, it may still be urged that there is no ground for maintaining that the involvement of the two terms is reciprocal, that the relation to mind is in any way constitutive of nature. The process of knowing, say the neo-realists, does not in any way alter the nature of the object. The object is what it is quite apart from any relation to the mind which knows it. Indeed, must we not suppose that the conscious mind itself, with its function of knowing, appeared for the first time in the process of evolution when certain material conditions were fulfilled? And if this is true, should not mind be regarded as a mere result of natural

processes, not as a necessary complement to these processes, or as something which they presuppose?

These questions involve issues that are so ultimate and far-reaching that I would gladly avoid discussion of them, if I could, in this preliminary sketch. I think that at this stage it is better not to go beyond what may be called the minimum or immediate implications of experience. The external order that we call nature is something that is at least knowable by mind. That seems to be the very least that experience can assume and still remain experience. The only alternative assumption is that of "things-in-themselves" which have only an external relation to each other and to mind. But this throws us back from experience to the effort to show in abstract terms how experience is made. It seems, then, permissible, to say that "knowability" is a genuine characteristic of things, not an accident external to them. If it is the nature of the mind to know, it is also the nature of things to be known, and we accordingly seem entitled to assert that the order that we call nature is not fully complete apart from this relation. Nature, as Kant says, must consist of possible objects of experience. This does not imply that such objects must exist as representations within the mind. I have already given reasons for refusing to accept this statement. It does imply, however, that the relation to mind is a constituent moment of things, not something added on from the outside. Moreover, when we speak of the appearance of mind from the standpoint of cosmic evolution we do not think of the process as complete, even in its physical aspect, until consciousness has appeared, until the relation to mind which was implicit in it from the first has become explicit.

There are undoubtedly other considerations which might be urged as evidence of the essential involvement of nature with the life of mind. But it seems better to begin by taking this doctrine in the minimum sense in which one may hope it may find general assent. Its further implications and more complete formulation will appear in a more concrete and convincing form in the movement of philoso-



phizing, which is occupied at once with the determination of the real and the criticism of the categories of knowledge, as parts of the same undertaking. The principle of an Absolute experience cannot be accepted at the outset on the authority of formal arguments, and indeed when introduced in this way it is nothing more than an empty name. If it is to have meaning it must grow out of the critical process of experience and be justified by this; it must emerge as the result which has been defined and rendered concrete by the whole process of thought of which it is the necessary outcome; it must show itself capable of including and doing full justice to the standpoints of the other categories, as well as of supplying the demands for fuller intelligibility which they fail to meet. I am inclined to think that the criticism that idealists tend to evade the real problems of experience by bringing in a kind of ready-made notion of an Absolute mind is not always without justification. This category of Absolute mind has meaning and content only when it is exhibited as growing out of the reflective process of experience; it is justified only when it is shown to be a necessary standpoint in order to enable reason to overcome actual difficulties that present themselves within human experience itself. Whether such a conception in the end is indispensable as the goal of speculative philosophy is a question which cannot be answered by any *a priori* method. It is only indispensable if it concretely proves itself indispensable in the process of dealing with genuine problems of experience. Moreover — and this must never be forgotten — if this conception of an Absolute mind is to be anything more than an abstraction, it must come, not to destroy, but to fulfill the program and promises of the categories of ordinary experience. It must be capable of justifying and completing, while at the same time transforming by illuminating, the standpoint of common sense and of the special sciences. Such a conception accordingly cannot be the starting-point or presupposition of speculative idealism. This philosophy knows no royal road to insight, but follows the beaten path of experience. Moreover, speculative philosophy is not distinguished from com-

mon sense and science in its starting-point: it begins where they begin without any doubts regarding the reality of the world, or any presupposition that it is necessary to stand on one's head and see things in an inverted position in order to see them truly. It is distinguished from these other attitudes toward experience only as emphasizing and making more explicit the common effort of all experience to see things steadily and to see them whole. Speculation is not an effort to get beyond experience: its object is to see, to comprehend reality through the process of experience.

I have emphasized this continuity and connection of philosophy with the other forms of the intellectual life because I think that what has been the popular mode of approach, that of beginning with "inner experience" and then raising the question as to how objectivity is to be secured, has tended to give the impression that philosophy is disparate in purpose and essence from other forms of inquiry. And from this belief the conclusion that it is not a concern of the ordinary man is a short and easy step. The result has been to isolate philosophy from the ordinary life of reflection; to make of it something recondite and scholastic.

Now I will return and attempt to complete the description of the standpoint and procedure of speculative idealism. I have already pointed out that this philosophy begins by viewing the mind and the objective system of nature as complementary and hence inseparably related aspects of the conscious life which is experience. I should like now to add that a relation which is equally obvious, and which also must be accepted as complementary, is that of the individual mind to the minds of other individuals, what we may speak of as a complementary social relation. There are thus three moments or co-ordinates whose complementary relationship it is the nature of experience to define. Experience is at once an explication or revelation of reality, a comprehension of the mind of one's fellows, and a coming to consciousness on the part of the mind of the nature of its own intelligence. Philosophy, insisting on seeing things as they really are, must proceed with this sys-

tem of relationships in view. The initial reflection necessarily leaves these relationships largely undefined; it is, however, sufficient to prevent us from falling into the error of attempting to define reciprocally acting centers as static and isolated realities.

There is also a further implication of this standpoint which it is important to make explicit at the outset. When once this standpoint is adopted, it is no longer possible to view experience as made up of existences or entities, each with its own independent self-enclosed center. The objective system of experience which all knowledge postulates is, as we have seen, at once my experience, the experience of my fellow men, and the nature of reality. Of course it is not maintained that the experience of any moment is adequate to express the nature of reality or the full meaning of my neighbor's mind. But the experience of any moment is not complete as my experience: it is not adequate to express my full meaning. In so far as it has any value at all, in so far, that is, as it is a genuinely objective experience, it is true for my neighbor as well as for myself, and also holds true in some sense as a description, or an illustration, of the nature of reality. In principle, then, experience is thus universal and inclusive. And by this expression I wish to imply two things: first, that it is the character of knowledge to claim to exhibit this universality and inclusiveness; and, secondly, that it is essentially a process of criticism, having the power to discover its own shortcomings and to proceed step by step to remedy them.

Now, it is at once obvious that a description of knowledge and such professions on its part, are, so long as our thought is tied down to the category of existence, not possible. You know something of the insoluble epistemological problems that arise as a consequence of this limitation. Is the idea, it is asked, numerically one with the object which it knows, or are they two things? Or do two persons looking at the sun have one and the same idea? How can things which are distinguishable be identical, or the many be a one? It is clear that these questions admit of no satisfactory answer on the as-

sumption that experience and reality are nothing but a compound of bare existences. To take even the first step toward comprehending reality in its concreteness we must realize that what we call facts are values as well, embodiments of universal relations. Both to common sense and to philosophy reality reveals itself as transcending the particularity and mutual exclusiveness of mere existences. Philosophy is here endeavoring only to gain recognition and explicit statement for what is constantly assumed in everyday experience. It is as belonging to a system, or perhaps an indefinite number of systems, that things are known as existing in our ordinary ways of dealing with them; in their concreteness they always appear as members of some order, as meanings or significances which are not confined to an isolated "here" and "now," as they would be if they were taken as bare existences. Even in the special sciences, the point of view of value is never eliminated. The special sciences do, indeed, succeed in eliminating the subjective and contradictory systems of value in which uncritical experience construes things, and set up as a common measure some objective system, like the system of energy, or the system of life, in terms of which the particular facts are read and evaluated. It is not unusual to assume that in thus casting out the idols of subjectivity the special sciences attain to a realm of pure facts that are not values, to existences which are uncontaminated by any relation to a category or hypothesis of intelligence. It is fortunately not necessary on this occasion to argue against such a position. There is still in these special sciences an appeal to an order or system, and it is with reference to this system that the facts are chosen and evaluated; but it is to the order of the universe, or, what is the same thing, the order of intelligence, rather than to an arbitrary system established by the mind of an individual. The various orders of the special sciences — for what we call science by no means constitutes a single order — are accordingly systems of value whose form and character are largely determined by certain assumptions regarding the nature of reality. So long as we proceed on

the hypothesis that it is the nature of intelligence to know, to reveal the nature of reality (and this all forms of experience must assume), it is surely contradictory to separate existence from value, the particular from a system of laws and principles based upon some more general assumption or category. The whole nest of illusions against which I am perhaps arguing at unnecessary length, appears to arise from a desire to grasp reality as it would be if there were not such a principle as intelligence. And does this not again involve the assumption that the nature of reality is to be discovered by looking back to the beginning before it was contaminated by the mind, rather than on ahead to discover what experience can reveal it to be? All attempts to discover an original datum out of which experience is made, whether in the form of *a priori* rational principles or of the "immediate facts" of the most radical empiricism, are essentially identical in logical method. The assumption which they share in common is that the problem of philosophy is to explain experience by showing how it is made, rather than to comprehend its function and development. In adopting this procedure, then, Neo-Realism ranges itself logically with the old metaphysics, limiting itself like the latter to an analytic dealing with the formal aspects of experience.

But in the interest of fair play I feel obliged to point out that the same logic leads existential or "mental" idealism to what is in principle an identical conclusion. For if we say that the understanding makes nature, and that the pure forms and categories of the mind must be determined apart from any matter of experience, we are simply taking intelligence, or mind, as an absolute prius, as the realist takes his given entities. In both cases alike the appeal is to something *a priori*, something that can be taken in itself as existing independently of what it is revealed to be in the process of experience.

As opposed to the views just described, what I have called speculative idealism finds its ideal of truth and reality in the nature of experience itself. It appeals to no entities, and to no *a priori* system of logical forms. This experience, as we have seen, presents

itself as an individualized system composed in some way of other less inclusive individualized systems, and these it finds grouped about the three reciprocally determining co-ordinates, of self, other selves, and nature. For further determination of these constitutive moments and their relation it has nowhere to look except to the critical process of experience itself. Its logic and ideal of truth must be that of the concrete universal; so much is determined by the very form of experience. But the nature of intelligence and the nature of the world must be communicated to the mind gradually through the conscious and critical exchange with its social and physical environment. We have always to look on ahead for the truth about the mind and reality, rather than to assume that these are existing data from which experience set out. James somewhere remarked that things are "what they are experienced as." This statement is delightfully ambiguous, but if I am not mistaken, it was intended to suggest that the nature of reality reveals itself once for all without reflection to a "genial experience of the first look." Against this, I am of course maintaining that the faith of speculative philosophy is that the mind and things are what they show themselves to be *in the whole course of experience*, and that they are not once for all "given" at the first moment or at any particular moment.

But now one must ask, What is the place and function of speculative philosophy in regard to this course of experience? What is the ideal of philosophical experience? The answer must surely be, to see things as they are. How is that possible? Well, our postulate is that it is the nature of the mind to know. But that postulate seems to be rendered nugatory by the fact that finite intelligence must always approach experience from some particular point of view, with some special purpose of investigation which, just because it is special, is inadequate to comprehend the truth of the whole. There is no conceivable problem of reality as a whole, Professor Dewey is never tired of telling us; all problems are specific and defined by a special purpose. Now it seems to me that this is never quite true of any form of intel-

lectual inquiry: there is always in any genuine human inquiry, I venture to think, at least an implicit reference to a more comprehensive problem than that upon which attention at any moment is immediately directed. But it is the *differentia* of philosophy that from its standpoint this larger reference is always consciously explicit. What constitutes any inquiry philosophical is the fact that the specific inquiry is recognized as part of a more comprehensive problem. Thinking is viewed as a continuous and progressive function which goes on steadily with the work of experience, not as a task of solving a series of disconnected problems. The postulate that it is the nature of the mind to know, signifies that the mind can go on knowing, can progressively overcome its oneness, can penetrate through the continuity of experience more and more deeply into the nature of reality. It is not the existential mind of any one moment to which this postulate is applied, but the mind as the continuous principle of criticism, the mind as the free and comprehensive principle of intelligence.

I have said that mind is always in contact with reality: that all its forms of experiencing must be regarded as possessing some truth, however partial and inadequate this may be. At ordinary levels of experience it is only, as it were, the surface of mind that is thus involved: the results are fragmentary, incomplete, and contradictory. But the freedom and comprehensive character of the mind manifests itself as *the principle of criticism*, which exhibits and removes the limitations and defects of the earlier experience by the discovery of a deeper and more comprehensive principle of intelligibility. It is in virtue of this capacity of going on continuously to correct and complete any given experience that it can be said that the mind is able to know. Now, it seems to me that it is just this free and unlimited spirit of critical inquiry that constitutes the ideal of philosophical experience. Some breath of this spirit there must of course be wherever there is mental life, intellectual curiosity. Philosophy does not introduce a new principle: it is just the development and most complete expression of the nature of mind.

Nor is it true that professional students of philosophy necessarily possess and exemplify this spirit or that it is lacking in ordinary men or in scientific inquirers. It is necessary to remember that an individual is always more and also something less than his profession. But, apart from individuals, it is true that philosophy is the freest and most systematically comprehensive expression of this principle of criticism. Science, as distinguished from philosophy, is also critical; but its criticism is limited to what we may call matters of detail; as bare science or unphilosophical science it does not criticize its own principles and assumptions but accepts them as given, as determining the scope of its problems. It is thus not an entirely free inquiry, being conditioned by the limitations of the assumptions which it accepts as its starting-point. To philosophy, on the other hand, is committed the function of making explicit the underlying assumptions and purposes of the various stages of experience, and of raising questions as to the possibility of obtaining a more direct or more adequate mode of approach to the nature of reality. *Philosophy is thus absolutely free inquiry*, without presuppositions in the sense that it is able to criticize and transcend any category that falls short of the complete range and scope of the whole mind and the whole of reality. There is only one thing that it is unable seriously to question: its own capacity to advance beyond any given limit; only one category that lies beyond criticism, and that is the category of intelligence. Within these limits, which are the limits of intelligibility itself, there is nothing which is not subject to criticism and revision, no predetermined structure of reality, and no table of the *a priori* forms of the mind. Philosophy is accordingly just intelligence coming to full consciousness of itself, turning back upon itself and becoming critically aware of its working principles; looking forward and taking a more comprehensive view of its own purposes, trying all things, proving all things, and holding fast to that which critical experience reveals in regard to the nature of the world and of intelligence.

Speculative idealism may then be de-

scribed as occupied either with the criticism of the categories of experience, or with the determination of the nature of reality. For these undertakings, though distinguishable, are part and parcel of the same task, and must be carried on together. Since the categories are principles of objective mind, mind in actual commerce with reality, they can be discovered and defined only through their actual employment in the concrete process of knowing. And on the other hand, since reality is in its very nature knowable in terms of mind, that is, in terms of some universal principles, determination of the real necessarily involves the question of the categories and of their systematic relationships. There is accordingly, I think, no justification for the separation of problems of knowledge from problems of reality, although interest in any one discussion may center around one or the other phase of the common inquiry.

I have been maintaining throughout this paper that speculative idealism must interpret the mind and reality in terms of the concrete universal. For the individual alone is real. Now, in maintaining this concrete position, there are two abstract views to be reckoned with which are sharply opposed to each other: the one maintaining that only the particular existence is real, and the other finding reality in the universal. Both are based on the same principle of abstraction, viz., on the separation of existence from meaning. But, as I have already suggested, in no actual form of experience is this separation ever complete. "Perceptions without thoughts are blind, and thoughts without perception empty." Nevertheless, two facts should be recognized. First, that the development of experience is *in the direction of* a constantly greater degree of concreteness or individuation; and secondly, in this process of concretion, deliberate abstraction (which from the very nature of experience can never be complete or final) is a necessary means to the goal. For example, the abstract existential point of view adopted by the natural sciences is not only necessary and justified for the special purposes of these inquiries, but is also indispensable for the more

comprehensive task of philosophy. Without the analyses and results which are derived from this point of view, it would be impossible for philosophy to attain to any concreteness of view, either in regard to the parts or the whole of experience. Of course, the results thus obtained by the sciences cannot be taken over by philosophy at their face value, so to speak. They have to be interpreted and translated into terms of more general significance, through restoring the abstractions that have been made.

The same point receives illustration from the use which is made of abstract terms in logical definitions and descriptions. The theory that thinking is a process of abstraction is a necessary counterpart of the existential point of view. And, like that point of view, it has a relative justification. Thinking involves some degree of abstraction; but the abstraction is a means, not the end. Concepts are, if you please, methodological instruments, but they are always fashioned in the interests of the concrete purpose of knowledge. Their function cannot be adequately understood unless one keeps in mind the purpose of the knowledge process as a whole, which is of course to reveal the nature of individuals. It is, I think, because this final purpose of experience has not been kept in mind that it has been possible for the doctrine to maintain itself that thinking necessarily moves in the realm of abstractions. But no one would seriously maintain that abstract classifications and labels represent the final goal of thinking, the ultimate achievement of intelligence. If it is the nature of the mind to know, the process of reflective experience, *taken as a whole*, must be a process of concretion in which abstraction is a mere movement and instrument.

To render this sketch even approximately complete, an account should be given of the way in which the relations between the three dynamic co-ordinates of experience are to be conceived. These are, as we have said, the self, other selves and nature. I have on another occasion described the process of intelligence in terms of a social dialectic,<sup>1</sup> and can only state here that I regard the

<sup>1</sup> "The Social Nature of Thinking," *Alumni Bulletin*, University of Virginia, April, 1916. (See above, chapter III. — Ed.)

process of thinking as necessarily involving social relations among a group of individuals. Regarding the question of the relation of the mind to nature, however, I should like to add a few words. In the first place, speculative idealism has, I think, to accept nature in very much the sense in which it is presented to us by the assumptions of common sense and the objective sciences as a physical order. I fail to find any logical compulsion, in the supposed interest of monism, to "reduce" matter to terms of mind, or to interpret it with panpsychism as at bottom composed of mind stuff, or psychical entities. All that monism can legitimately demand is that there shall be a *universe*; it cannot on *a priori* grounds require that this universe shall be all of one piece or stuff. The conception of nature and mind as complementary in character satisfies, it appears to me, all the legitimate demands of monism. Moreover, I think that there are positive reasons for maintaining the contrast between the material order of nature and the conscious order of mind.<sup>\*</sup> I cannot help feeling that the view of nature as a uniform and permanent system of natural laws is a necessary element in a rational experience. The contrast (and in a certain sense the opposition to subjectivity which we are conscious of when facing natural objects and forces) is an important influence and element in a sane and normal life. I am unable to conceive how there could be a rational life without an apprehension of an objective order, unmoved by our clamor, indifferent to our moods, with which we can hold commerce only on nature's own terms. Water does not run uphill; one cannot by taking thought add a cubit to one's stature. We have in a very important sense to accept the world as we find it. Now, such a steady, dependable world, so far from being an irritation or a balking of reason, appears to me to furnish the only possible basis for rationality. It is sometimes said, and truly, I think, that one cannot either become or remain a

rational being, really sane and intelligent, without an interchange of ideals with one's fellows. But, in addition to this social supplementation, I feel also that rationality requires for its support and steadying just the element that nature, in its opposition to subjectivity, supplies. This consciousness of the need of supplementation from nature as system of objects finds expression in the emotional life as well, though I am inclined to think that what has been called the "cosmic emotion" has an intellectual root. At any rate, the emotional experience of mental refreshment and renewal from the contemplation of natural objects and natural laws is a common one, and may help at least to illustrate what I have in mind. We could not have a rational experience in a universe consisting solely of a community of freely acting psychic beings. We need also a material system of things, an order to which we have to submit our intelligence and our will, an order that we are unable to bully or cajole, but which we can learn to control only by understanding and obedience.

One other consideration: this conception of nature as a fixed system of uniform laws has been one of the great achievements of civilization. It has been the work of centuries of thought. To maintain it requires ceaseless vigilance against the forces of irrationalism and superstition. The tendency toward barbarism manifests itself not only in such attempts to break down moral law and the moral order as are illustrated by the Teutonic nations at the present day, but also in a whole group of contemporary theories which are only thinly disguised attempts to strip nature of her order and rationality in order to revert to some primitive superstition akin to witchcraft and animism. We may say "*securus judicat orbis terrarum*," but it is also true that this order is something to be maintained by our militant efforts.

I have spoken of the recognition of a physical order complementary to mind, and yet

<sup>\*</sup> Cf. Bosanquet, *The Principle of Individuality and Value*, chapter x. The following sentences are from page 363: "It (i.e. panpsychism) treats the striking and thorough-going opposition and inseparability of mind and externality as if it had no more significance than a mere congeries of centers of experience belonging to different classes and degrees. It transforms the complementariness of mind and nature, on which as it would seem, their inseparability depends, by an analysis of the one into the other such as wholly to destroy the specialty of function for which the one is needed by the other."

standing opposed to subjectivity, as an indispensable basis for the life of reason. Nevertheless, this to some minds seems to impose upon knowledge an impassable limitation, to be a barrier that meets intelligence as a check, which from its very nature shuts it off from reality. The consequence of such a separation between knowledge and its object, or at least between the rational form of knowledge and its object, is shown in the doctrine that reality is known, if at all, only in some form of feeling, or intuition that transcends the conditions of philosophical experience. To accept such a conclusion would, of course, be inconsistent with the whole theory of experience which I have been attempting to outline. I have introduced this question here because I think it serves as another illustration of how the limitations of what I have called the existential point of view continue to persist in systems of idealism.

Here as before the assumption appears to be that knowledge is a literal reduction of the object to terms of itself; that to know the object it is necessary that I should *be* the object, or that the object should be identical, in terms of existential stuff, with the knowing mind.<sup>2</sup> A rational view of experience is committed to the doctrine of identity in difference. There must indeed be identity between my meanings and the nature of things; but so long as the object remains as something to be known there must also be distinction and difference. There seems to me no mystery about this unless we arbitrarily insist on making one; reality is surely the only standard of comprehensibility. Is not the demand, then, that the knowing experience shall be transcended a consequence of the limitations of thought that continues to employ the abstract categories of existence?

<sup>2</sup> It is, I think, upon such assumptions as these that Mr. Bradley's dissatisfaction with the results of logic finally rest. Cf. *Appearance and Reality*, pp. 544 ff.

# Ralph Barton Perry

(1876- )

PERRY's early philosophical nourishment was received from Emerson and Carlyle. He went to college at Princeton, where the spirit of the emeritus President McCosh was still strong; in this atmosphere the ministerially minded Perry studied as an undergraduate. He went to Harvard, where he has long been an influential teacher, at a time when James was breaking the spell of Absolute Idealism. Perry's mind was turned from faith to criticism and his vocation from the ministry to teaching. He joined the realists in the campaign against Idealism and like many others was preoccupied with its shortcomings. Along with his interests in the analysis of knowing and of purpose Perry has sustained his interest in morals which has broadened to embrace the general theory of value. He has made valuable studies in the logic of the moral sciences. Perry has also distinguished himself in historical writing. Among his best contributions in this field is the magnificent two volume work on William James.

As a critic of idealism Perry was especially influential because of his analysis of what he called "The Ego-Centric Predicament." The historical importance of this criticism warrants its reprinting at the end of this section on Idealism.

## THE EGO-CENTRIC PREDICAMENT<sup>1</sup>

I SHALL deal in the present paper with a problem that is sufficiently limited to justify the hope that it may be solved on its merits. I shall seek to discover whether a certain circumstance, which has never been disputed, does or does not constitute evidence for a theory that has been much disputed. The circumstance I shall call *the ego-centric predicament*, and the theory, *ontological idealism*.

I shall not attempt to determine the truth of ontological idealism, except in so far as that theory is established by an appeal to the ego-centric predicament. Furthermore, I do not attribute either the theory or the argument, in the form in which I present them, to any individual philosopher. My statement is intended to contain propositions that approach as exactly as any proposition can to a

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted from *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology, and Scientific Methods*, 7:5-14 (1910), with the permission of the author and the editors.



theory and an argument that are among the commonplaces of philosophy. But since the attempt to state the theory has raised doubts in my mind as to the possibility of stating it at all, and since I have found an exact statement of the argument to be equivalent to its refutation, I cannot reasonably suppose that any one ever deliberately assented to such statements. Inexact discourse cannot be criticized until it has first been converted into definite propositions; and these can never, with any certainty, be identified with the original assertions. For this reason polemics directed against historical opinions are like to prove unconvincing and futile. I propose, then, to examine certain propositions which I have myself defined. But, at the same time, I hope that what I have to say will be recognized as having an important bearing on traditional issues.

What I mean by *ontological idealism* is best expressed by the proposition: Everything ( $T$ ) is defined by the complex, I know  $T$ . For the purposes of this proposition the "I" is in no need of any definition beyond what it contains from its being the initial term in this complex. In order to make it plain that the term is generalized, I shall substitute *ego*, or  $E$ , for the pronoun. The term  $T$  is primarily distinguished from other terms only in that it has unlimited denotation; it refers to anything and everything. It is desirable that the operation or relation "know" should be freed from its narrower intellectualistic meaning; and it will, therefore, prove convenient to use the expression  $R^c$ , to mean any form of consciousness that relates to an object. Thus  $R^c$  may refer to thinking, remembering, willing, perceiving, or desiring. I am justified in denominating it as a relation, because in the theory and in the argument which I am examining it plays the part of the connecting link through which  $E$  and  $T$  form one complex. Ontological idealism is, then, a name for the proposition:  $(E)R^c(T)$  defines  $T$ .

It will be observed that the proposition asserts that *the specific relation*  $R^c$  obtains between  $E$  and  $T$ . Ontological idealism is not to be confused, therefore, with a theory which simply asserts that *some* relation to  $E$

is definitive of  $T$ . Such a theory might be offered on the following grounds. No item in the universe can escape being related to every other item in the universe. Therefore, since there is at least one  $E$  in the universe, no  $T$  can escape being related to it. But a term is defined by all of its relations, hence every  $T$  is defined by its relation to an  $E$ . But such a theory would be trivial, because it would attach no peculiar importance to the relationship singled out for special mention. On the same ground one could construct a theory to the effect that  $T$  is defined by its relation to the number 7, or to Washington's crossing the Delaware, or to the flower in the crannied wall. There is an interminable series of such ontologies, and if established on such grounds, idealism would be only one of infinitely many negligible alternatives.

Not only does ontological idealism assert the specific relation  $R^c$ , but it asserts that this relation defines  $T$  as  $T$ 's other relations do not. In other words, "definition" is intended in a sense in which some, but not all, relations are definitive. Otherwise, the theory would again become trivial and negligible. No theory of relations can neglect the difference, for purposes of definition, between a relation like that of a moving body to the masses of surrounding bodies, and a relation like that between a man's fortunes and his horoscope (or, "that part of the ecliptic which is on the eastern horizon at the instant of his nativity"). If the latter type of relation were as definitive as the former, then there would be no ground for preferring astronomy to astrology, or an idealistic ontology to any one of a number of others. Thus, every  $T$  is in the same universe with the number 7. Expressing the relation "with" by the symbol  $R^w$ , we can construct an ontological proposition to the effect that,  $(7)R^w(T)$  defines  $(T)$ . If ontological idealism is to be distinguished from the infinitely many negligible propositions which may thus be asserted, it must be contended that  $R^c(E)$ , is in some sense necessary to  $T$ , while  $R^w(7)$ ,  $R^w(8)$ , etc., are not.

Any remaining doubt of this must be dispelled, when it is observed that the only ground on which it would be possible to as-

sert the universal proposition, every  $(T)R^c(E)$ , is the discovery of the necessity of the relationship in particular instances. For complete induction is evidently out of the question. Speaking generally, the assertion that a thing is definable by all of its relations, can never throw any light on the relations that it does in truth possess. For that purpose the thing must be regarded as defined by some relations only. Before, then, it can be shown that everything possesses the relation  $R^c$ , that relation must be regarded as peculiarly indispensable to it.  $R^c(E)$  must be shown to be necessary to  $T$ , as two dimensions are necessary to a plane, or hydrogen and oxygen to water.

I desire in the present investigation to leave out of consideration a rapidly growing doubt as to the possibility of any such branch of knowledge as ontology in the traditional sense. Thus it may well be that the failure of the materialistic ontology is due not so much to the special limitations of the concept *matter*, as to the impossibility of obtaining any concept that shall have the unlimited denotation and connotation attributed to being or reality. Indeed, I do not feel at all sure that the words "being" and "reality" mean anything in exact discourse. But I waive that general question for the sake of isolating a narrower issue.

Ontological idealism, then, is a theory to the effect that  $T$  necessarily stands in the relation  $R^c$  to an  $E$ , or that the relationship  $R^c(E)$  is indispensable to  $T$ . Now the attempt to prove this theory at once reveals a predicament that might otherwise escape notice. One must attempt to discover the precise nature of the modification of  $T$  by  $R^c(E)$ ; but one promptly encounters the fact that  $R^c(E)$  cannot be eliminated from one's field of study, because "I study," "I eliminate," "I think," "I observe," "I investigate," etc., are all cases of  $R^c(E)$ . In short,  $R^c(E)$  is peculiarly ubiquitous. There can be no question concerning the fact; it owes its importance in the estimation of philosophers to its being one of the few facts to which philosophy itself originally called attention. Science has occasion to eliminate errors of judgment and relativities of sense,

but has no occasion to eliminate consciousness altogether; and therefore has not discovered that it is impossible. We cannot, then, disagree as to the fact, nor as to its peculiarly philosophical or epistemological significance. But we are still left in doubt as to what the fact proves with reference to the problem which revealed it. My contention is that it proves nothing; or rather that it proves only the impossibility of using a certain method to solve the problem. In other words, it is not an argument, but a methodological predicament. Let me further elaborate this predicament.

In order to discover if possible exactly how a  $T$  is modified by the relationship  $R^c(E)$ , I look for instances of  $T$  *out* of this relationship, in order that I may compare them with instances of  $T$  *in* this relationship. But I can find no such instances, because "finding" is a variety of the very relationship that I am trying to eliminate. Hence I cannot make the comparison, nor get an answer to my original question by this means. But I cannot conclude that there are no such instances; indeed, I now know that *I should not be able to discover them if there were*.

Again, with a view to demonstrating the modification of  $T$  by  $R^c(E)$ , I compare  $T$  before and after it has entered into this relationship with some  $E$  other than myself. But in making the comparison, I institute the relationship with myself, and so am unable to free  $T$  *altogether* from such relationships.

Again, within my own field of consciousness, I may attempt to define and subtract the cognitive relationship, in order to deal exclusively with the residuum. But after subtracting the cognitive relationship, I must still "deal with" the residuum; and "dealing with" is a variety of the very relationship which I sought to banish.

Finally, just in so far as I do actually succeed in eliminating every cognitive relationship, I am unable to observe the result. Thus if I close my eyes I cannot see what happens to the object; if I stop thinking I cannot think what happens to it; and so with every mode of knowledge. In thus eliminating all knowledge I do not experimentally eliminate

the thing known, but only the possibility of knowing whether that thing is eliminated or not.

This, then, is what I mean by the ego-centric predicament. It is a predicament in which every investigator finds himself when he attempts to solve a certain problem. It proves only that it is impossible to deal with that problem in the manner that would be most simple and direct. To determine roughly whether  $a$  is a function of  $b$ , it is convenient to employ Mill's "Joint Method of Agreement and Difference," that is, to compare situations in which  $b$  is and is not present. But where  $b$  is "I know," it is evidently impossible to obtain a situation in which it is not present without destroying the conditions of observation. In other words, the problem of determining the modification of things by the knowing of them is a uniquely difficult problem. The investigator here labors under a peculiar embarrassment. But this fact affords no proper ground for any inference whatsoever concerning the true solution of the problem; hence it affords no argument for any theory in the matter, such as ontological idealism.

For the purpose of further illustration, and in order to suggest specific historical applications, let me consider several varieties of ontological idealism that gain illegitimate support from this predicament. The varieties which I propose here to examine are distinguished by the type of dependence on  $R^c(E)$  which is attributed to  $T$ . The *creative* theory asserts that  $E$  creates  $T$ ; the *formative* theory asserts that  $E$  forms or organizes  $T$ ; the *identity* theory asserts that  $E$  is  $T$ .

It is characteristic of creative idealism, the most naïve variety of the theory, to dispense wholly with analysis of  $E$ ,  $T$ , and  $R^c$ . In other words, the necessity of the relationship is not deduced from the nature of its elements. One is held to be justified in asserting it without any previous definition of thing or ego or consciousness. Thus one might assert that "esse est percipi," or that "die Welt ist meine Vorstellung" without express reference to the nature of "esse," "percipi," "die Welt," "meine," or "Vorstellung." There would remain as evidence for the assertion only the

invariable agreement of the elements denoted by these words. One finds no "esse" that is not perceived, no "Welt" that is not an ego's idea. But the method of agreement, unless tested by the method of difference, affords no proof; especially when, as in this case, there is an accidental reason for the invariability of the agreement. To rely on or employ invariable agreement when unsupported by other evidence is to commit that elementary fallacy, of which *post hoc ergo propter hoc* is the most common case. It is unnecessary for me to urge that this fallacy has been not infrequently committed, and that it has served on the whole as the favorite means of beguiling innocent minds into the vestibule of subjectivistic philosophies. But the degree to which this fallacy is virtually involved in the more advanced reasoning of idealism, is not, I think, sufficiently recognized.

Let us consider, for example, what I have called the "formative" theory, reducible to the proposition,  $E$  forms  $T$ . This epistemology owes its chief claim to distinction to the fact that it starts from an analysis of  $T$ , and is therefore more rational than the creative theory. It is shown that every  $T$  involves the same group of ideas or categories, so that it is possible to define *thing in general* in terms of that group. More specifically, it is shown that everything involves such formal characters as shall enable it to stand in determinate relations with all other things. Since everything must belong to truth, and since truth is one and systematic, everything must possess the logical qualifications for membership in one universal system. Now it is evident that this is not as yet idealistic. And yet, for some reason, it is often regarded as equivalent to idealism, or as being only one inevitable step short of idealism. This is easily explained if we allow for the surreptitious or unconscious use of the ego-centric predicament. Thus, the categories may be introduced not as the conditions of being, but as the conditions of "experience," or consciousness of being. But this means that things are already construed as instances of the  $(E)R^c$  relationship. Doubtless whatever is necessary to things is necessary to the knowledge of them; so that one may regard

ontological constants as cognitive constants. But this proves that knowledge is a function of things, and not that things are a function of knowledge. The latter assertion, unless new evidence is introduced, is simply a *petitio principii*. That this fact should so easily escape notice is due, I think, to the presumption that since things are severally found in the  $(E)R^c$  relationship, that relationship must be necessary to them. It is easy to beg the question because whatever one makes the starting-point of the analysis is in fact "my object." Building the results of the analysis about this, the total system becomes a system of consciousness.

But there is another motive that contributes to a looseness of reasoning here. The categories are ideas rather than sensations; they are the fruit of analysis, detached from the empirical context by thought. They do not belong to the individuals of nature. But where, then, do they belong? Now most modern philosophers scarcely regard it as necessary to prove that categories, relations, and ideas, are essentially modes of thought; and in this they are aided and abetted by common sense. For, since the overthrow of scholasticism, philosophy and common sense alike have been habitually nominalistic. Empiricists and rationalists differ only in that with the former nominalism is given a skeptical emphasis, while with the latter it is given a constructive emphasis. But to adopt a nominalistic interpretation of the categories, to regard them as acts of consciousness, is to commit oneself forthwith to idealism. Are categories necessarily related to a knower, are they conditioned by the relationship  $R^c(E)$ ? Here again we meet with the ego-centric predicament. It is impossible to find a relation without a comparison of terms, it is impossible to find a fundamental logical concept that is not conceived. Since I cannot find a category without knowing it in the manner required by categories, I can find no category that is not a mode of

thought. But since this clearly has to do with the circumstances conditioning my investigation, it must be discounted in my conclusions concerning the thing investigated. If I allow it to create the slightest presumption one way or the other, and rely on that presumption in further inferences, my construction is vicious and ungrounded.

While I very much doubt if any idealistic theory is untainted by this error, it is possible to define a third variety of the theory in which the error is much less conspicuous. This variety I have called the "identity" theory, because it reduces to the proposition:  $E$  is  $T$ . This theory also bases itself on an analysis of  $T$ , or of  $T$  so far as intelligible and true. It is held that every  $T$  is definable in terms of relations through which it is connected with every other  $T$ . So far formative and identical theories agree. But in the latter more attention is given to the implications of a relational definition. If  $T'$  is definable in terms of  $R(T^2)$ , then  $R(T^2)$  must be internal to  $T'$ , or  $(T')R(T^2)$  must be identical with  $T'$ . At the same time,  $(T')R(T^2)$  must be identical with  $T^2$ . Furthermore, since  $T'$  and  $T^2$  are defined by  $(T')R(T^2)$ , and not  $(T')R(T^2)$  by  $T'$  and  $T^2$ , or, since  $(T')R(T^2)$  is intelligible *per se*, while  $T'$  and  $T^2$  are intelligible only in terms of  $(T')R(T^2)$ , the latter must be held to be prior to the former, as their ground, source, or explanation. In other words, in order that being shall be definable, it must be construed as a whole which is both identical with its parts, and also prior to them. Now this conclusion *may be* regarded as equivalent to a *reductio ad absurdum* of the relational definition; in which case it is necessary to establish idealism on entirely different grounds.<sup>1</sup> But what some idealists regard as beneath reason, other idealists regard as the ideal of reason. It is conceded that the conception of a whole which is both prior to, and identical with, its parts will not hold of any whole of nature, such as mechanism or organism. Nor is it possible

<sup>1</sup> I am thinking of Mr. Bradley in particular. For him the absolute is a means of dispensing altogether with relations, and hence is not argued from the necessity of a consciousness that shall supply relations. Mr. Bradley's idealism ("We perceive, on reflection, that to be real, or even barely to exist, must be to fall within sentence." *Appearance and Reality*, p. 144) is, so far as I can see, either a pure assumption, or a loose and unwarranted inference from the ego-centric predicament.

to define it abstractly, using symbols for terms and relations. If the attempt be made it will result only in such self-contradictions as  $T'$  is identical with  $(T')R(T^2)$ , or  $(T')R(T^2)$  is prior to  $T'$ . Indeed, if it were possible to discover this type of whole and part relationship in nature or the realm of logic, it would be impossible to infer idealism from it.<sup>1</sup> But it is contended that there is a unique complex in which this relationship is directly and luminously exhibited, that complex being consciousness.<sup>2</sup>

The crucial and more neglected question yet remains, however. Why should it be asserted that the self, subject, or ego is both identical with each of its objects and also prior to them? Why should knowledge be construed as "self-representation," "self-externalization" or "self-positing"? Now the answer to this question lies, in part, I am convinced, in a certain readiness among philosophers to assert *anything* of consciousness. It would appear that there is no conception too paradoxical to be harbored there. The proposition, gold is gold, is redundant, and the proposition, blue is its own other is nonsense; but the propositions, I am I, and, the self is its own other, somehow pass for intelligible discourse. Similarly, while a planetary system which is identical with each planet and prior to them, is clearly a doubtful proposition, men nod their heads sagely when they hear of a self which can dispense with its own parts, and also be wholly present to each of them. So long as the self remains obscure and unanalyzed, loosely denoted by

such terms as "I," "ego," or "subject," it will doubtless afford a refuge for logical lawlessness.

But apart from this general disposition to laxity and high-handedness, how are we to account for the assertion that the thing known and the knower, the  $T$  and the  $E$ , are identical? Unless there is ground for such an assertion the conception of a whole that is identical with each of its parts and prior to them, cannot be saved from its inherent self-contradictions. As a general conception it is not to be distinguished from the obsolescent notion of substance, or of a thing-essence which is all of its attributes, and yet none of them. That it does not share the hard fate of the latter notion is due to the supposition that it is saved by special revelation. Although in general it is absurd, we are supposed to be unable to deny it because of the discovery of an unmistakable case of it. The fact being so strange, we must overcome our prejudice against fiction. We should not be entitled to invent a universal or absolute knower, identical with its objects severally, and prior to all of them, unless we had evidence that a knower, and a knower alone, is capable of just that sort of relationship. Hence everything is staked on an examination of such instances of knowing as can be observed.

It is asserted that in any typical case of knowing  $(E)R(T)$ , the knower ( $E$ ) and the thing known ( $T$ ) are identical. But if we mean by  $E$  and  $T$  *the terms of this relationship*, then they are clearly not identical; for their

<sup>1</sup> Thus Professor Royce's contention that the part is equal to the whole in an infinite system, would prove only that being is infinite, and not that it is in any sense conscious. His subjectivism is, so far as I can see, not proven at all. In *The Conception of God* and in certain more recent verbal utterances he would seem to be exploiting the ego-centric predicament. In *The World and the Individual*, he relies mainly on the contention that, since nothing in the universe can be strictly independent of anything else, objects cannot be independent of ideas. But, as I have endeavored to point out above, this would prove that the universe can be defined in terms of anything you choose.

<sup>2</sup> "The unity is at once the whole of which the individuals are parts, and also completely present in every individual." "It still remains true that it is that particular relation of which the only example known to us is consciousness." McTaggart, *Studies in the Hegelian Cosmology*, pp. 14, 19.

"There is need of a single term to describe a One which is not a system, and for this purpose the capitalized word Individual, as qualified by the indefinite article, answers as well as any other known to the writer. It will later appear that only a self can be, in this sense, an Individual. . . . An Individual, on the other hand, has an existence fundamental, logically prior, to that of the parts or of the members. It is not separate from them, but it is distinguishable from them. It is fundamental to the parts, whereas the parts, though they are real, are not absolutely essential to it; it expresses itself in the parts, instead of being made up of them." Calkins, *The Persistent Problems of Philosophy*, pp. 378-79.

I should regard this as a rather incautious statement of the argument; not untrue to Hegel, but so express in its recognition of the priority of the whole self over its several acts or objects as to be exposed to the charge of naïve spiritualism.

identity would destroy the relationship, and the operation would lose its complexity. If, on the other hand, I mean by  $E$  and  $T$  the *complete* or *essential* natures of the entities referred to, then they do not stand in the cognitive relation. Thus I may assert that  $E$  is really  $(E)R^c(T)$ , and that  $T$  is also really  $(E)R^c(T)$ , and that  $E$  and  $T$  are therefore really identical. But  $(E)R^c(T)$  does not stand in the relation  $R^c$  to  $(E)R^c(T)$ . In other words, *I know T* does not know *I know T*. In any case, then, it is impossible to assert that the knower and the thing known are identical, where these are defined as the terms of one cognitive relationship.<sup>1</sup>

Now if it be so simple a matter to refute the assertion that in the complex  $(E)R^c(T)$ ,  $E$  is  $T$ , how are we to account for that assertion? Only, I think, through the characteristic confusion of mind created by the ego-centric predicament. The  $T$  of the complex  $(E)R^c(T)$  does, as a matter of fact, stand in the relation  $R^c$  to  $E$ . This cannot be denied, albeit it is a redundant proposition when affirmed. It is only necessary to proceed, loosely and as may suit one's convenience, to substitute  $(E)(R^c)(T)$  for  $T$ , or *thing qua known* for thing, and one has accomplished the miracle of identifying a complex with one of its own elements. Then, the other element having been dealt with in the same manner, the two elements are made equal to an identical complex, and hence to each other. But the whole question of the extent to which  $(E)(R^c)T$  can be substituted for  $T$ , depends on a very precise knowledge of the bearing of this relationship on  $T$ . The original problem, *What does  $(E)R^c(T)$  mean to T?* has, in all this elaborate dialectic, only been prejudged and confused. And the solution offered is not only without a shred of evi-

dence, but is charged with the support of a logical abortion.

I have not undertaken to do more than to isolate a species of dangerous reasoning that infests a certain region of philosophical inquiry. The question of the precise modification which a thing undergoes when it is known, is a proper problem; and the theory that that modification is profound, or even in some sense definitive, is a legitimate speculative alternative. But nothing whatsoever can be inferred from the mere ubiquity of that modification, from the mere fact that nothing can be found which is not thus modified. This self-evident fact simply defines the means that must be employed for the solution of the problem. We cannot employ a method which in other cases proved a convenient preliminary step, the empirical, denotative method of agreement and difference. There remains, however, the method which must eventually be employed in any exact investigation, the method of analysis. The mere fact that  $T$  is invariably found in a certain complex, since it cannot be corrected by the method of difference, must be set aside, and not allowed to weigh in our calculations. But we may still have recourse to that analysis of all the elements of the complex, of  $T$ ,  $E$ , and  $R^c$ , which would be required in any case before our conclusions could assume any high degree of exactness. Having discovered just what an ego is, just what a thing is, and just what it means for an ego to know a thing, we may hope to define precisely what transpires when a thing is known by an ego. And until these more elementary matters have been disposed of we shall do well to postpone an epistemological problem that is not only highly complicated but of crucial importance for the whole system of philosophical knowledge.

<sup>1</sup> It is evident that such considerations as these would necessitate a revision of certain current notions of "self-consciousness." But I cannot follow up the suggestion here.

## PART SIX

### *Pragmatism and Critical Empiricism*

---

ONE can understand the history of modern philosophy only by recognizing certain attitudes built up prior to the coming of modern science. The Greek and medieval belief was that man might find an absolute truth. To reach it was the end; the method by which it was to be achieved was to proceed systematically on the basis of indubitable principles. This tradition lasted into the modern scientific era on the assumption that it was still possible to reach a final truth independent of the limitations of experience. In other words, the goal of knowledge for the modern scientist remained the same, though the method had changed. Instead of revelation and dialectic, mathematical method became the ultimate bar before which all evidence had to appear. The history of modern philosophy is the record of the difficulties which have arisen as men have progressively discovered that the former Absolute was incompatible with this new method.

Randall has put the issue clearly. Speaking of the work of the scientists, he says:

They were trying to arrive at that complete and perfect understanding and explanation of the universe that only a God could possess, by the methods possible for a being who is not a God but a rational animal. Their ideal was still a *system of revelation*, though they had abandoned the *method* of revelation. They found knowledge and valid knowledge to be sure; but it gradually and painfully dawned upon them that the knowledge they could find and have been finding is a different sort of knowledge from that which they thought they were finding.<sup>1</sup>

This shift in the goal of knowledge might be described as the change from an attempt to gain a veracious picture to an attempt to get control. For with the growing disillusionment in the possibility of gaining absolute truth has come the faith that even a biological creature like man can get the kind of knowledge which enables him progressively to master his environment and to live better.

Here is where pragmatism enters. It has insisted that both the method and the goal must be redefined. Lovejoy has declared that there are at least thirteen varieties of pragmatism, and this may be the case. But they all seem to have certain characteristics in common. Pragmatists have invariably been empiricists. Experience has always been the final touchstone, and there have been no *a priori* truths recognized which have not arisen in experience and which are not to be referred back to it. It is not the same form of empiricism as that espoused by Locke, Berkeley, and Hume. In his sketch of the development

<sup>1</sup> John Herman Randall, *Making of the Modern Mind* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1926), p. 267. Reprinted with the permission of Houghton Mifflin Company. (Italics not in the original.)

of American Pragmatism, John Dewey points out that British empiricism was retrospective, concerned with antecedent phenomena, whereas pragmatic empiricism looks at the consequent phenomena: upon possibilities of action rather than for precedents. Locke had recognized that experience gives us ideas, but by ideas he meant "whatsoever the mind perceives in itself, or is the immediate object of perception, thought, or understanding." Hence we know, not the world, but ideas. We cannot know the world because we can never tell whether the ideas are true copies. No wonder Locke concluded that "our knowledge comes not only short of the reality of things, but even of the extent of our own ideas." The modern pragmatist thinks that he escapes this dilemma because he turns his eyes to the future, disavowing entirely any attempt to get a veracious picture of the world in itself, and makes of ideas instruments for the exploration of, and mastery over, the world rather than copies of it.

This conclusion means, of course, that all hope of absolute truth is given up. The pragmatist is not even interested in the question as to what the world "really" is. Man approaches it with his interests and his particular equipment. Naturally the results are colored by these facts. But he feels that he has struck a good bargain in giving up what seems to have been a futile quest for the thing in itself in exchange for progressive control over his environment.

It is often said that the pragmatist has no metaphysics, that his method precludes any concern with what reality is. The reply made is that even though he does not have an absolute picture of the whole world he does know how to predict in the world, and passes judgment upon it piecemeal. He breaks sharply with an older, static conception, and sees this as a universe in the making. At this point he accepts without qualification the theory of evolution, and applies it to all aspects of life and nature.

There were three men who made outstanding contributions to the development of pragmatism. Charles Sanders Peirce and William James were the founders of the movement while John Dewey brought it to maturity.

In the eighteen-seventies a club was formed in Cambridge which included among its members Oliver Wendell Holmes, John Fiske, Chauncey Wright, William James, and Charles Sanders Peirce. It was in this group that Peirce formulated the concept and coined the word "pragmatism." As Dewey points out, the most important aspect of this new theory was its insistence on the connection between the individual's thought and his purposes. Allied was the belief that a concept could only be defined in terms of its bearing upon actual behavior. This belief was given its clearest formulation in the famous article "How to Make Our Ideas Clear." "Consider what effects, which might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object." Peirce does not mean that action becomes the supreme good, but only that it is through action that concepts can be applied to existence, and that it is only through such application that concepts can be given any meaning. Concepts are no longer thought to be reflections of an external reality; they are logical instruments for the active exploration of a world which is to be known only through living.



This essay lay unnoticed for twenty years until, in the address of 1898, James gave Peirce the credit for having started him in the right direction by pointing out that "the effective meaning of any philosophic proposition can always be brought down to some particular consequence, in our future practical experience, whether active or passive; the point lying rather in the fact that the experience must be particular, than in the fact that it must be active." But Peirce was by no means satisfied with the use which James and others made of his term, and in 1905 he coined the word "pragmaticism," which, he said, was "ugly enough to be safe from kidnappers."

William James had far too restless a temperament ever to be a system builder. He was rather an explorer opening up new territories for others to settle in. His greatest contribution was his formulation of a modern biological interpretation of mind, but his pragmatic epistemology and pluralistic metaphysics have also had wide influence.

The story is told of William James that as a small boy he once discouraged his younger brother, Henry, from coming with him because, said he, "I play with boys who curse and swear." Through his long academic career he continued to espouse dubious causes and to expound his philosophy in what seemed to many a similarly frivolous fashion, yet his ideas had a more serious content and influence than might be supposed from the language he used.

He had two predominant interests, philosophy and science. It would be hard to say which was the stronger. It was his first interest which resulted in his voluntarism; his second which was responsible for his empiricism.

"Philosophy like life must keep the doors and windows open." That was the characteristic way in which he expressed his faith in the empirical method. Or again, the empirical interpretation is the postulate: "that the only things which shall be debatable among philosophers shall be things definable in terms drawn from experience." But as has been pointed out, there is a sharp difference between his empiricism and that of Locke, Berkeley, and Hume. His was prospective, "looking away from first things, principles, categories, and of looking towards last things, fruits, consequences, facts."

Concepts or beliefs are not copies or reports of any external situation. They are tools to be used. "We harness perceptual reality in concepts in order to drive it better to our ends." The meaning of an idea consists solely of the particular consequences to which it leads. The only differences that can be detected between concepts are the differences that they make in action. In a statement reminiscent of Peirce, he says that we must "Test every concept by the question: 'What sensible difference to anybody will its truth make?' If, questioning whether a certain concept be true or false, you can think of absolutely nothing that would practically differ in two cases you may assume that the alternative is meaningless, and that your concept is no distinct idea."

His definition of truth follows from his attitude toward empiricism. Truth is something which is applied not to reality but to our statements and beliefs, and it must satisfy the purpose for which it is formulated. Traditional idealists held that our ideas are true when they are what we ought to think about an object. But for James "ideas *become* true just in so far as they help us to get into satisfactory relation with other parts of our ex-

perience." "The true . . . is only the expedient in our way of thinking, just as the right is only the expedient in the way of our behaving."

Behind this philosophy is a distinctive theory of mind, which was, in fact, one of James's major contributions. For him, mind was not what it had been for Locke, a *tabula rasa* or kind of empty room to which percepts come. It is not a mirror which passively reflects; it is more like an antenna which gropes about, it is an instrument for biological adaptation. We learn actively and not passively. The mind puts questions, experience answers them; mind proposes, the environment disposes.

His metaphysics is the fruit not simply of these premises, but the expression of his entire personality, his zest for life. "I think that the center of my whole *Anschauung* . . . has been the belief that something is doing in the universe, and that novelty is real." "Everything happens in the middle of eternity. All days are judgment days and creation morns." Such was the basis of his pluralism. This is an unfinished universe. "For rationalism reality is ready-made and complete from all eternity, while for pragmatism it is still in the making." It is also a precarious world. It is an arena where there are real gains, but also real losses; and James was content that this should be so. It was no philosophy for tender souls which he offered, but it did make life worth living for those in whom the fighting spirit was still alive.

Here one comes to the source of his religious philosophy. He was no detached scientist willing to wait passively for the event to turn out as it would. Mere knowledge of consequences cannot carry one into the thick of the fight; only faith will do that. "... as the test of belief is willingness to act, one may say that faith is the readiness to act in a cause the prosperous issue of which is not certified to us in advance." This is what he meant by "The Will to Believe," a title which he later wished he had phrased as "The *Right* to Believe." There are issues where faith creates its own verification. Belief in success helps breed success. The optimistic insistence that this is the kind of universe where men may stake their very lives in the attempt to realize some dream of beauty or of truth is what he means by religion. It is not that this is the kind of a world that *is* good, but that it is the sort of place in which men have a real chance to *make* good. That it is an adventurous religion, demanding courage as well as faith, he knew well.

At no place did he express his attitude toward life more vividly than in the closing pages of his essay "Is Life Worth Living?"

If this life be not a real fight, in which something is eternally gained for the universe by success, it is no better than a game of private theatricals from which one may withdraw at will. But it *feels* like a real fight — as if there were something really wild in the universe which we, with all our idealities and faithfulnesses, are needed to redeem; . . .

These, then, are my last words to you: Be not afraid of life. Believe that life *is* worth living, and your belief will help create the fact. The "Scientific proof" that you are right may not be clear before the day of judgment . . . is reached. But the faithful fighters of this hour, or the beings that then and there will represent them, may then turn to the faint-hearted, who here decline to go on, with words like those with which Henry IV greeted the tardy Crillon after a great victory had been gained: "Hang yourself, brave Crillon! We fought at Arques, and you were not there!"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Is Life Worth Living?" *The Will to Believe* (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1898), p. 61. Reprinted with the permission of Longmans, Green and Company.

The similarities between the thought of William James and John Dewey are too obvious to need much stress; it may be more useful to emphasize their divergencies. Dewey has much less interest in the voluntaristic faith of pragmatism, and temperamentally he would be more apt to write on the will to disbelieve than the opposite. His concern has been primarily with the analysis of the thought process. His instrumentalism has been an attempt to formulate in precise terms a logical theory of concepts by determining how intelligence functions at times of indecision. Dewey's interests are less religious than James' and much more social. Both men show the results of the Darwinian theory, but whereas James is more in the stream of British empiricism, Dewey is influenced more by Hegel.

Yet for all their differences James is probably the strongest influence that Dewey has ever felt. It was the *Principles of Psychology* which crystallized Dewey's reaction against his early devotion to Hegel. James' biological emphasis, his insistence that man is totally a part of the process, was the aspect of his thought which made the deepest impression. Dewey has said: "It was reserved for William James to think of life in terms of action."

Dewey starts with a recognition of existence as a combination of factors both stable and precarious. On the one hand there are values which man treasures; on the other there is the uncertainty as to their permanence. Hence man has been compelled to seek a greater security and certainty than life seems to offer, and he has done this through thought and action. But it is Dewey's contention that the traditional method of the philosophers has been to divorce the two and put the emphasis upon thought interpreted more in contemplative than in instrumental terms. He recurs continually to the question as to why there has been the contempt for action, as to why the arts by which man has achieved security are looked down on. He comes to the conclusion that it is because this kind of security is merely relative, never absolute. Philosophers have turned to thought divorced from action, thinking that there they might escape from the perils of uncertainty. Through thought they hoped to pierce the veil that hides us from the "real" world, to see a transcendent realm not marked by change and decay, where they could grasp the absolute and there be at peace.

This separation of knowledge from action has had important implications. It has meant that there has been a glorification of the "permanent" over the "changing," with a resulting contempt for the transient world in which we live. It has also meant that knowledge was defined as a correspondence between an idea and that which was antecedently real. The question Dewey continually raises is whether knowledge is to be considered as a disclosure of a reality which is prior to and independent of knowing, or whether it is to be regarded as being invariably related to human purpose for the control of experienced objects. This is the basis of his instrumentalism. It seems clear to him that we are in a precarious world, that the kind of thought which would simply transport us to a realm of alleged permanence is a thorough evasion of the real job, which is to be thoughtfully active in the here and now.

Another important aspect of Dewey's philosophy is his definition of experience. It is not regarded by him as subjective or personal in the sense of being put over against that which is natural. It is a process of undergoing, of doing and suffering. In order to

avoid splitting the world into things and the subjective experiencing of things, he makes experience a relationship between various types of objects. In this way he tries to place the human and mental in continuity with natural processes.

Dewey has often been charged with making the quest for knowledge the supreme goal of life. This charge seems hardly justified in the light of his reiterated statement that it is the consummatory experiences, the enjoyments of life to which knowledge refers. Thinking is merely the means by which man makes experience secure. Nor does he maintain that it is through knowledge that we grasp reality. He makes a further distinction between things "had" and things "known." We do not go to knowledge in order to get some exclusive grasp on reality. The world of ordinary experience is the real world. We have the world in all its qualitative aspects, and this having is a far richer experience than mere knowing.

Knowledge, then, is not a method for reaching the inner nature of things; it is simply a method of using the consequences of objects in order to gain control over them that we may the more securely enjoy them.

Knowledge thus becomes a kind of action. It is not the passive contemplation of the Greek or medievalist; its method has become that of the experimental scientist; its goal is no longer a vision of the absolute but control over the transient. Mind is no spectator beholding the world from without. It is in the world as a part of the process. Intelligence is not something which man brings to bear on nature from without; it is nature itself creating and preserving opportunities for a richer life.

Another charge frequently made is that the pragmatist is confused in declaring that a proposition is true because in some way it works or satisfies the need which caused its formulation. Critics have said that the statement should be inverted to read that a proposition works or satisfies because it is true. Dewey's reply is explicit. "If one remembers that what the experimentalist means is that the effective working of an idea and its truth are one and the same thing — this working being neither the cause nor the evidence of truth, *but its nature*, it is hard to see the point of this statement."

His moral theory has the same premises as his epistemology and metaphysics. Here, too, he is concerned to break down the traditional distinctions between the natural and social, the moral and non-moral. The self is interpreted in terms of habits formed in interplay between the organism and the environment, and because such is its origin it is thoroughly controllable through a modification of the physical and social setting. His ethics is as prospective as his theory of knowledge. The moral issue concerns the future. Blame and punishment are no longer ends of moral investigation; they are instruments for the development of responsible persons. In line with this approach he faces the old problem of determinism, and gives an answer which is not only similar to that of Aristotle and Spinoza but which closely resembles the position of Jonathan Edwards. Freedom is not interpreted as the absence of causes; it is the determination of the widest number of desires which have been intelligently evaluated in order to give them long range perspective. It is only the truth which can make men free. Culturally this implies freedom from the barriers of tradition, authority, class, and privilege; the widest possible sharing of experience and knowledge of the conditions and consequences of social life he terms democracy.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

*I. Primary Sources:*

- DEWEY, JOHN, *ETHICS* (with James H. Tufts). New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1908.
- DEWEY, JOHN, *THE INFLUENCE OF DARWIN ON PHILOSOPHY AND OTHER ESSAYS IN CONTEMPORARY THOUGHT*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1910.
- DEWEY, JOHN, *DEMOCRACY AND EDUCATION*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1916.
- DEWEY, JOHN, *ESSAYS IN EXPERIMENTAL LOGIC*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1916.
- DEWEY, JOHN, "THE NEED FOR A RECOVERY OF PHILOSOPHY," in *CREATIVE INTELLIGENCE, ESSAYS IN THE PRAGMATIC ATTITUDE*. With A. W. Moore, H. C. Brown, G. H. Mead, B. H. Bode, H. W. Stuart, J. H. Tufts, H. M. Kallen. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1917.
- DEWEY, JOHN, *RECONSTRUCTION IN PHILOSOPHY*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1920.
- DEWEY, JOHN, *HUMAN NATURE AND CONDUCT. AN INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1922.
- DEWEY, JOHN, *EXPERIENCE AND NATURE*. Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company, 1925.
- DEWEY, JOHN, *THE QUEST FOR CERTAINTY*. New York: Minton, Balch and Company, 1929.
- DEWEY, JOHN, *INDIVIDUALISM, OLD AND NEW*. New York: Minton, Balch and Company, 1930.
- DEWEY, JOHN, *PHILOSOPHY AND CIVILIZATION*. New York: Minton, Balch and Company, 1931.
- DEWEY, JOHN, *HOW WE THINK*. Revised edition; Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1931.
- DEWEY, JOHN, *A COMMON FAITH*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934.
- DEWEY, JOHN, *ART AS EXPERIENCE*. New York: Minton, Balch and Company, 1934.
- DEWEY, JOHN, *LIBERALISM AND SOCIAL ACTION*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1938.
- DEWEY, JOHN, *LOGIC: THE THEORY OF ENQUIRY*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1938.
- DEWEY, JOHN, *FREEDOM AND CULTURE*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1939.
- JAMES, WILLIAM, *THE PRINCIPLES OF PSYCHOLOGY*. 2 vols. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1890.
- JAMES, WILLIAM, *THE WILL TO BELIEVE AND OTHER ESSAYS IN POPULAR PHILOSOPHY*. New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1897.
- JAMES, WILLIAM, *THE VARIETIES OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE: A STUDY IN HUMAN NATURE*. New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1902.
- JAMES, WILLIAM, *PRAGMATISM: A NEW NAME FOR SOME OLD WAYS OF THINKING*. New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1907.
- JAMES, WILLIAM, *THE MEANING OF TRUTH: A SEQUEL TO "PRAGMATISM."* New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1909.
- JAMES, WILLIAM, *A PLURALISTIC UNIVERSE*. New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1909.
- JAMES, WILLIAM, *SOME PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY: A BEGINNING OF AN INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY*. New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1911.
- JAMES, WILLIAM, *MEMORIES AND STUDIES*. New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1911.
- JAMES, WILLIAM, *ESSAYS IN RADICAL EMPIRICISM*. New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1912.
- JAMES, WILLIAM, *COLLECTED ESSAYS AND REVIEWS*. New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1920.
- MEAD, GEORGE H., *THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE PRESENT*. Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company, 1932.
- MEAD, GEORGE H., "THE PHILOSOPHIES OF ROYCE, JAMES, AND DEWEY IN THEIR AMERICAN SETTING," *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ETHICS*, vol. 40.
- MEAD, GEORGE H., "THE PHILOSOPHY OF JOHN DEWEY," *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ETHICS*, vol. 46.
- MEAD, GEORGE H., *MIND, SELF, AND SOCIETY*. Charles W. Morris, editor; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934.
- MEAD, GEORGE H., *MOVEMENTS OF THOUGHT IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY*. Merritt H. Moore, editor; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1936.
- MEAD, GEORGE H., *THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE ACT*. Charles W. Morris, editor; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938.

- PEIRCE, CHARLES SANDERS, CHANCE, LOVE, AND LOGIC. Edited with Introduction by Morris Cohen. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1923.
- PEIRCE, CHARLES SANDERS, COLLECTED PAPERS OF CHARLES SANDERS PEIRCE. 6 vols. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, editors; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1931-1935.

## *II. Secondary Sources:*

- BOURNE, RANDOLPH, "TWILIGHT OF IDOLS," UNTIMELY PAPERS. New York: B. W. Huebsch Company, 1919.
- HOOK, SIDNEY, THE METAPHYSICS OF PRAGMATISM. Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company, 1927.
- HOOK, SIDNEY, JOHN DEWEY. New York: John Day Company, 1939.
- LEWIS, CLARENCE I., MIND AND THE WORLD ORDER. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929.
- LOVEJOY, ARTHUR O., "THE THIRTEEN PRAGMATISMS," THE JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY, 5:6-12, 29-39 (1908).
- MORRIS, CHARLES W., SIX THEORIES OF MIND. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1932.
- OTTO, MAX C., "JOHN DEWEY: PHILOSOPHER OF A NEW AGE," THE SOCIAL FRONTIER. 1937.
- OTTO, MAX C., THINGS AND IDEALS. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1924.
- PERRY, RALPH BARTON, THE THOUGHT AND CHARACTER OF WILLIAM JAMES. 2 vols. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1935.
- PERRY, RALPH BARTON, IN THE SPIRIT OF WILLIAM JAMES. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1938.
- RATNER, JOSEPH, THE PHILOSOPHY OF JOHN DEWEY. New York: Modern Library, 1938.
- RILEY, I. WOODBRIDGE, AMERICAN THOUGHT.
- ROGERS, A. K., ENGLISH AND AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY SINCE 1800.
- SANTAYANA, GEORGE, "DEWEY'S NATURALISTIC METAPHYSICS," OBITER SCRIPTA. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936.
- SCHILPP, PAUL A., editor, THE PHILOSOPHY OF JOHN DEWEY. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1939.
- THOMAS, M. H., BIBLIOGRAPHY OF JOHN DEWEY. With an introductory essay by H. W. Schneider. New York: Columbia University Press, 1939.
- WOODBRIDGE, F. J. E., "THE PROMISE OF PRAGMATISM" AND "EXPERIENCE AND DIALECTIC," IN NATURE AND MIND. New York: Columbia University Press, 1937.

# George Herbert Mead

(1863-1931)

GEORGE HERBERT MEAD was born in South Hadley, Massachusetts. After his graduation from Oberlin College he went to Harvard University and later to the Universities of Leipzig and Berlin for his doctor's degree. He taught from 1891 to 1894 at the University of Michigan, and from 1894 until his death at the University of Chicago.

Although Mead has not had the fame of James and Dewey, he was one of the men who did most to formulate the modern pragmatic philosophy. He has been especially influential in the development of the concept of the social nature of the self. He rejects the idea of isolated, atomic selves, insisting that they come into being through a process of self-conscious interaction and interpenetration with other selves. Because he knew the men so well, and played so vital a part in the movements himself, he is admirably fitted to discuss the place of Royce, James, and Dewey in American philosophy.

## THE PHILOSOPHIES OF ROYCE, JAMES, AND DEWEY IN THEIR AMERICAN SETTING<sup>1</sup>

THAT part of North America to which our forefathers came, the Atlantic Coast from Maine to Florida, and that ever receding frontier of which they progressively took possession, that frontier that was at last arrested by the Pacific stretching from Washington to southern California, this far-stretching country defines in geography and history the community of the United States of America. But while historical geography thus draws its boundaries and marks out the set of its vast adventure, it does not define

and exhibit the mind that was formed within this American community and that informed and shaped the course of that adventure.

It was a mind that brought with it from Europe habits already formed of ecclesiastical and political self-government. The dominant habits were those of Puritanism and the democracy of the town meeting. The philosophy of the Puritan is indicated in the phrase "thrift and righteousness." Calvinism had found a place for business within its spiritual economy. It could find the blessing

<sup>1</sup> *International Journal of Ethics*, 40:211-31. Reprinted with the permission of the editors.

of God in what the medieval church had called usury. It opened the door to a capitalistic régime. God had given men property and blessed them in its increase, and punished the unprofitable steward by taking away even that which he had. In England, the Puritans and their successors from whom the American colonists came remained after the restoration a subordinate part of the nation. The monarchy, parliament, and the courts, and the social hierarchy from which their functionaries were drawn, bore witness to old feudal habits that still controlled the national life, set the standards of conduct, gave form to social values, and furnished their emotional resonance. The culture of England's ruling class, sprung from an unbroken history, dominated the spiritual life of the community. When the colonies threw off their allegiance to the English crown and entered the family of independent nations, they had brought about a change which was even more profound than their political revolution. They had changed the character of the state which gave the former colonists their political consciousness. When they recognized themselves as citizens it was no longer as members of the English social hierarchy. For this they had substituted a political national structure which was a logical development of the town meeting. The state has never impressed itself upon the American citizen. It is nothing but the extension in representative form of the political habits of the town meeting. The caucus and the political boss stand so largely for its *modus operandi* that it commands little weight of inherited respect. It was not until the national state became a practical necessity in the administration and distribution of public lands that it became an essential part of the political consciousness of the community west of the Alleghanies. Then it could be appealed to for the development of roads, canals, and railways. Apart from these, the pioneers continued to govern themselves in the fashion of town meetings. Any man was qualified for an office if he could secure the votes for his election. And the astonishing thing was that it worked so well. Thinly spread over a vast continent, this nexus of

town meetings not only governed themselves in rough and ready fashion but organized states which were organic parts of the United States, and the fundamental reality of it in men's consciousness was baptized in blood. But the reality of it grew out of the solution of their problems. It was a union that had to be achieved, not one that could be brought out like an invisible writing in men's ancient inherited experience. The habit of self-government in local affairs was an inherited English method, but the creation of a national state out of these habits was purely American. Despite two revolutions English society had preserved the outward form of a state which symbolized its unity in the forms of feudal loyalties, while the power had been shifted to a Parliament within which the representatives of new groups were given a voice in governmental control. But these representatives belonged to a hereditary ruling class who fused their representation of a rising democracy with the historical traditions of the English gentleman — the essence of English liberalism. Within the community the men whom commerce and industry had clothed with new demands placed these demands in the keeping of those who had the historic tradition and training. So the as yet unfranchised voters and the nonconformists could find their articulate spokesman in so typical an English gentleman and so vivid a churchman as Gladstone. The education and social training which we call culture was in the minds of Englishmen an essential part of the consciousness of the state. Carlyle wanted to deepen it into a religion, and Disraeli saw in it not only the opportunity of Tory democracy but of a far-flung imperialism. The state could be realized not only in the symbolic person of the monarch but also in the dependence of the masses upon those whose training and social position gifted their representatives with the right to fight their battles within the ancient structure of the state. It was not only the military victories of England that were won on the fields of her public schools. The historical and functional universality of the state could be still incarnated in a social feudal structure. The training, the culture, and



the ideas of its upper classes were essential factors even in the political struggles which democratized its government.

It is, I think, necessary to recall this fundamental difference between the American and English communities, if we are to understand the part played in our life by a culture which in one sense is as much English as American.

These differences of attitude in the corresponding groups in the English and American communities stand out most sharply, if we recognize that in England they were dominant elements in the middle class which was fighting its way to a controlling political position, a middle class which stood between a lower class of tenants, farm laborers, and the industrial proletariat of the manufacturing cities, on the one side, and the upper class of gentility, nobility, and the crown above them, on the other. In American society there was nothing below them and nothing above them. They did not have to convince a community of ancient tradition that their control would not sacrifice the values woven into its social structure and hallowed by its history. If the American Puritan was freed from the opposition of his English fellow, he was freed also from the necessity of deepening his philosophy to meet the demands of a more varied community. He had problems enough, but these did not include that of justifying his way of life and the principles underlying his view of the world to powerful hostile parts of his own community. This type of English individualism was set free to propagate itself in a great continent without its natural enemies.

It was an individualism which placed the soul over against his Maker, the pioneer over against society, and the economic man over against his market. The relations were largely contractual. Behind it lay a simplified religious philosophy, a theology, in which dogmatic answers were given to questionings as to the purpose of the world, the future of the human soul, moral obligations, and social institutions. Its Calvinism had separated church and state. It had come to terms with the Newtonian revolution and eighteenth-century enlightenment. Popular

education and economic opportunity sprang naturally from its social attitude and its geographical situation. It was the distillation of the democracy inherent in Calvinism and the Industrial Revolution, at liberty to expand and proliferate for a century without the social problems which beset it in Europe. The American pioneer was spiritually stripped for the material conquest of a continent and the formation of a democratic community.

It has not been, therefore, either in the fields of philosophic reflection and aesthetic appreciation or in that of historic retrospect that the American has sought for the import of his political activity. His most comprehensive institutions of social control and organization have found their reason for existence in the immediate problems of the community. The same is true of the economic life of the community. Success in business has not meant entrance into time-honored ruling classes. In no country in the world has striking success in business been so occupied with the economic organization and development in the economic processes themselves. Those larger communities which political and economic activities have always implied and involved, and which the historic relations of members of the European nations have in some sort expressed, have had little or no existence in the retrospect and historic structure of the American mind, with which to dignify and build out the import of activities which transcend their immediate field.

It has followed that the values of these social processes have been found in the achievements they have immediately secured or in the interest in the activities themselves, and as the immediate ends in politics and business are inadequate expressions of their values in the community, the ideal phase of politics and business has been found in the process rather than in their objectives. This implicit philosophy has been inarticulate. That it is there is evidenced in the social values which have permeated and controlled political and economic life in America, values which have transcended our politics and our business. The advance which has been achieved in our society has in the main been

due neither to leadership nor to ideas. There have been a few outstanding exceptions, but by and large I think this is true of the history of the community, of the United States. And yet we have inherited the literature, the philosophy, and the art of the Europe from which we separated ourselves in our political and economic undertakings. It was a culture which did not root in the active life of the community. The colleges which were the natural habitats of this culture, which should therefore have endowed with this culture those who were going out into the active life of the community, were not the centers from which the politicians and business men of the community were drawn. In the earlier years of our history they trained a larger percentage of the clergymen than of any other calling, but the separation of church and state was too profound not only in our institutions but also in our social attitudes to allow the church to be a dominant force in the direction of the onward life of the community.

It is this break between the culture and the directive forces in the community that was characteristic of the century and a quarter of the history of the mind of America. It stands out in all expressions of this culture, but it is to its import in philosophy that I wish to draw attention.

In eighteenth-century thought, science had discovered laws in nature and assumed them to exist in social processes. As God enacted them in nature, let the monarch enact them in society; and personal obligation to these monarchs would insure their operation in church and state. It was the undertaking of the romantic philosophies to fuse these two principles of social control into one. Nature was rational and society was rational. The principle of control was reason, but this controlling reason could be found only in an inclusive self that contained nature and society. Contrariety, the irrational, contradiction, evil, and sin, in nature and men, could only be overcome by the wider experience within which these disappear in the rational. What the romantic philosophy undertook was to find this process, in which the contradictions disappear in the higher

synthesis, within the experience of the individual mind; but as the solution must be already achieved in the timeless process of the infinite, the finite mind could find no direction for its conduct within its own reason. It could only realize itself in taking its place within so much of the transcendent whole as was evident in its experience. As that experience widened we could realize more and more of that infinite whole, but we had no such intelligent process within ourselves as would enable us to take the helm into our own hands and direct the course of our own conduct, either in thought or action. Still it was a romantic philosophy that was warm with the inner life of the self, and it vivified the past by reliving it. It brought romance into history and philosophy.

This romantic philosophy was reflected in America in Emerson and the members of the Concord School, but in America it answered neither to the program of the Absolute Idealists that sought to sweep all activities of the spirit, scientific, aesthetic, religious, and political, within the logic of the development of the self, nor to the undertaking of Carlyle to find within the depths of the self a principle of feudal leadership that could guide English society out of the wastes of the Industrial Revolution. It was allied in America to the clerical revolt against Calvinism, and brought with it a romantic discovery of a self that could interpret nature and history by identifying itself with their processes, but it was worked out neither in the logic of thought and social organization nor with regard to the demands of immediate social problems. It was a part of American culture, a culture which was fundamentally European. But the American became self-conscious in his belief that he had broken with the structure of European society. He felt himself to be hostile to the society from which his culture sprang. Nor was this break between culture and social activities mended by the literature of the New England group. This was shot through with a nostalgia for the richer and profounder spiritual experience across the Atlantic. It followed from this situation that culture in America was not an interpretation of American life. And yet the need

for interpretation was present in American consciousness, and the lack of a competent native culture was recognized. I believe that there is no more striking character of American consciousness than this division between the two great currents of activity, those of politics and business on the one side, and the history, literature, and speculation which should interpret them on the other.

This culture appeared then in the curriculums of American schools and colleges. There was no other to put in its place. America's native culture accepted the forms and standards of European culture, was frankly imitative. It was confessedly inferior, not different. It was not indigenous. The cultivated American was a tourist even if he never left American shores. When the American felt the inadequacy of the philosophy and art native to the Puritan tradition, his revolt took him abroad in spirit if not in person, but he was still at home, for he was an exponent of the only culture the community possessed.

When the great speculative mind of Josiah Royce appeared in a California mining camp and faced the problem of good and evil and examined the current judgments and the presuppositions back of them, he inevitably turned to the great philosophies of *outré mer*, in his dissatisfaction with the shallow dogmatism of the church and college of the pioneer. In all European philosophies since the time of Descartes the problem of knowledge had been central, the problem of relating the cognitive experience of the individual mind to the great structures of the physical universe which Newtonian science presented, and to the moral universe which Western society in its states and churches predicated. Some of these structures were new and some were old, and at various points they clashed with each other. The scientific presentations demanded acceptance on the basis of objective evidence. When they clashed with inherited dogma the individual had to find within himself, if he attempted to think out his problem, the reason for acceptance or rejection. If the clash came between scientific doctrines evidence could be obtained from the findings. The scientist was not thrown back upon his own mind. But if the

conflict arose between the dogmas in social institutions and scientific doctrine no such appeal could be made to accept findings. Western thought presupposed an ordered, intelligible, moral universe. Its ordered intelligible character, that is, its uniformity, enabled the mind to test its scientific findings, but its moral order presupposed a supreme end or purpose in which the purposes of voluntary individuals could appear as elements of an organized whole. However, no such ordered moral whole is given by which one may test his individual purpose. The same might be said of intelligible nature. No complete universe is given by which the scientist may test his hypothesis. But the scientist is quite willing to accept the experimental test of his hypothesis. His experience thus becomes a part of the objective world of science. For no modern scientist has skepticism been a practical problem. But the Western world has been obsessed with the conception of a given moral order with which the individual will must accord if the individual is to be moral. The scientist is not the less scientific because the hypothesis which he has brought to the experimental test is later proved to be incorrect. But the moral individual is good or bad as he has or has not conformed to the given moral order, and yet his judgment is fallible. Only Kant's rigorous but empty categorical imperative offers a seemingly logical escape from the dilemma. As it proved in the case of Kant and his idealistic successors, the established institutions of society offer the only palpable expressions of such a given moral order. Here skepticism is a practical problem. And it was out of attempted solution of the relation of the individual will and its purpose to a given all-inclusive aim of the absolute will that Royce's idealism arose.

Such skepticism has had its place in the American community, but it has belonged mainly to the adolescent over against the claims of the dogma of the church. It was not reflected in the general attitude of a community engaged in the reconstruction of its institutions. A striking difference between the spiritual lives of Europe and America, since the American revolution, is that a con-

tinuous process of revolution and reconstruction was going on in Europe while American institutions have been subject to no conscious reconstruction. The values embodied in the institutions of the European communities were felt to be profoundly threatened, or revolutionary parties sought to restate them in their own programs, or political and social reformers insisted that the changes they sought would not imperil them. In the background of all thought lay these values, and it is this sense of them in the face of the profound changes that were going on that gave to Europe in the nineteenth century its peculiar character. This same culture brought to American shores lacked this background of social reconstruction. It was foreign and yet it was our only culture. The dominance of middle-class ideals of contractual freedom, of political democracy, of freedom of the school from the church, these were commonplaces in American consciousness. The insurgence of these concepts and attitudes into an old feudally ordered society gave a rich setting for novelist, poet, and historian. The cultured American had to become a European to catch the flavor. He had to get another soul as does the man who has learned a new vernacular or who has traveled in foreign parts. Our own bitter struggle to abolish slavery that the country might remain a united community found little to illuminate and interpret it in this culture. The problem was not a European problem. Skepticism had a profound social import in Europe. The freethinker was not simply one who criticized theological dogma. He was a libertarian in a political sense and was thought to be endangering all institutions. It is only necessary to reflect upon socialism in Europe, and to think of the meaninglessness of it in the American community during the nineteenth century, to bring vividly to consciousness the profound difference between the European and the American minds. The result of this was that while there was a cultured group in the community, and while culture was sought vividly in institutions of learning, in lyceums and clubs, it did not reflect the political and economic activities which were fundamental

in American life. We realize that Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel each stood for a phase of the reconstruction that was going on in the German community; and we realize that this romantic idealism was not so foreign to the English community that Green could not draw from this idealism a new and living sense of the individual in the community and the social reality that expressed itself in the individual. But one cannot dream of that philosophy interpreting the relation of the American individual to society. And yet the American philosopher had to acquire his detachment of thought, his sense of the philosophic problem, and his training in philosophic disciplines in these European philosophies. They were, of course, as much his as were the medieval doctrines of Thomas and Scotus, or the philosophies of Greece. But Royce did not present the problems of American consciousness in the terms of the older philosophies. They were recognizedly distant in history, but he did present the problem of the relation of the American individual to his universe, physical and moral, in terms of the absolute idealism that was at home in a German, almost a Prussian soil. It is only in a community in which personal subordination is sublimated into identification of the self with the larger social whole, where feudal social organization still persists, that romantic idealism can interpret the immediate problem of the individual to the world. It was the passionate struggle of Royce's great mind to fashion, in his philosophy of Loyalty, an expression of this idealism which would fit the problem of American thought. He was obliged to take it into the vernacular of the church, where alone skepticism had a meaning, to seek for reverberations from Calvinistic and Pauline conceptions. His individual was voluntaristic; the judgment was an expression of purpose. His individual is American in his attitude, but he calls upon this American to realize himself in an intellectual organization of conflicting ends that is already attained in the absolute self, and there is nothing in the relation of the American to his society that provides any mechanism that even by sublimation can accomplish such a realization.

Not even in the Blessed Community, with Royce's social analysis of the self, does Royce lay hands upon an American social attitude that will express his undertaking. Causes, loyalty to which unites the man to the group, so far from fusing themselves with higher causes till loyalty reaches an ultimate loyalty to loyalty, remain particular and seek specific ends in practical conduct, not resolution in an attained harmony of disparate causes at infinity. Nor does Royce's stroke of genius — the infinite series involved in self-representation — reflect the self-consciousness of the American individual. The same remark may be made upon Royce's doctrine of interpretation. In each of these conceptions Royce points out that the individual reaches the self only by a process that implies still another self for its existence and thought. If the structure of reality that is organized about the self in the social process is already there, the concept affords a striking picture of its infinity. The logical implication, empty in itself, can interpret a structure if the structure is there and reveal its character. But the American even in his religious moments did not make use of his individualism — his self-consciousness — to discover the texture of reality. He did not think of himself as arising out of a society, so that by retiring into himself he could seize the nature of that society. On the contrary, the pioneer was creating communities and ceaselessly legislating changes within them. The communities came from him, not he from the community. And it followed that he did not hold the community in reverent respect.

We are not likely to exaggerate the critical importance of religion, as the carrier of the fundamental standards of social conduct, in the building up of the great American community; but it belonged to the character of the pioneer that his religious principles and doctrines, like his political principles and doctrines, were put into such shape that he could carry them about with him. They were part of the limited baggage with which he could trek into the unpeopled West. He was not interested in their origins or the implications of those origins, but in the prac-

tical uses to which they could be put. And no American, in his philosophical moments, regarding the sectarian meeting-houses of a western community would have felt himself at home in the spiritual landscape of Royce's Blessed Community. Notwithstanding Royce's intense moral sense and his passionate love of the community from which he came and to which he continued to belong, his philosophy belonged, in spite of himself, to culture, and to a culture which did not spring from the controlling habits and attitudes of American society. I can remember very vividly the fascination of the idealisms in Royce's luminous presentations. They were a part of that great world of *outré mer* and exalted my imagination as did its cathedrals, its castles, and all its romantic history. It was part of the escape from the crudity of American life, not an interpretation of it.

In the psychological philosophy of William James, on the other hand, we find purpose explaining and elucidating our cognition, rather than setting up a metaphysical problem which can only be solved by positing an infinite intellect. James's chapter on the concept is the source of his later pragmatism, and of the pregnant ideas which both Royce and Dewey confess that they owe to him. The passage from the percept to the concept is by way of attentive selection and the source of this attentive selection must be found in the act. Knowledge predicates conduct, and conduct sets the process within which it must be understood. Royce admits it, and considers the judgment an act, and then proceeds to draw metaphysical conclusions, if the universe is a moral universe. But for James the act is a living physiological affair, and must be placed in the struggle for existence, which Darwinian evolution had set up as the background of life. Knowledge is an expression of the intelligence by which animals meet the problems with which life surrounds them. The orientation of knowledge is changed. Its efficacy can be determined not by its agreement with a pre-existent reality but by its solution of the difficulty within which the act finds itself. Here we have the soil from which pragmatism sprang. Both Royce and James were influenced by the

science of their period. Royce was affected by mathematical science at the point at which mathematics and logic coalesce, and he was a considerable figure in the development of symbolic logic. James's medical training brought him under the influence of the biological sciences. But back of this lay James's own individual problem — the skepticism of adolescence set in a long period of illness that sickened both body and mind. What could he believe that would give him the assurance with which to face life? He demanded the right to believe that he might live. There must be a meaning in life that transcended the mechanistic conception of it which the biological sciences presented. Renouvier fortified him in his refusal to surrender the will to mechanism. The mechanistic doctrine could not be proved, and his own will to believe pulled him out of the pit.

James, though born in New York, was a New Englander. New England was the seat of the Puritan tradition and also the seat of culture, both that of the Old World and that which had continued to flourish in America. He had the keenest aesthetic response and had even tentatively addressed himself to the artist's life. Residence abroad had equipped him with European languages and made him at home in Europe, as he was at home in Boston and at Harvard, but his mental and moral citizenship was in America, as that of his brother Henry was not. In his own experience, he was not aware of the break between the profound processes of American life and its culture. He was not of pioneer stock. He condemned the crudity, the political corruption, the materialism of American life, but he condemned it as an American. It was perhaps because the solution that he sought for his own problems did not take him to foreign systems, that it was out of his own physiology and psychology that he felt his way to an intellectual and moral world within which he could live, that the cleavage between life and culture did not appear in his philosophy. His philosophy was a native American growth. The adolescent skepticism with which his mental struggles began was common to American youth who thought at all, and he found and fashioned within

himself the weapons with which to defeat it. He lived and thought freely. If any man's culture has been a part of himself, this was true of James. He carried no burden of learning or critical apparatus, and he was instinctively responsive to what was native to other people. Like Goethe he was at home in any circle, but without Goethe's sophistication. And yet he remained a New Englander, as far as American life was concerned. The principle of his solution was found in the individual soul. His was a lofty individualism. He was ready to go to the help of the Lord against the mighty, and called on others to go with him, but it was as individuals they were to go, to bring more moral order into a pluralistic unfinished universe.

He heralded the scientific method in philosophy. The test of the hypothesis was in its working, and all ideas were hypotheses. Thinking was but a part of action, and action found its completion and its standards in consequences. He adopted Peirce's laboratory habit of mind. But what were the consequences? In the laboratory of the scientist the hypothesis — the idea — is fashioned in terms of anticipated consequences. The experiment must be adjusted to certain prevised events, if the experiment is to say anything. The control of conduct is as essential in the formation of ideas as in the culmination of the act which tests them. And here lies the whole case of pragmatism in its interpretation of knowledge, for if the idea comes into the act, without becoming a part of the apparatus for intelligent control in this situation, the consequences will not test the truth of the idea. They will reveal nothing but the attitude of the individual. Now from the early days in which James was fighting for a foothold of assurance in living, through the poignant thought brought to expression in the will to believe, in his profoundly sympathetic analysis of types of religious experience, and in the lectures on pragmatism, James faced ideas of freedom of the will, of God, and the moral order of the universe, which demanded acceptance of the individual, at the peril of the loss of the values they subtend. And James fought to make the attitude of the individual in these crises pragmatic evidence

of the truth of these ideas. This led to the ambiguous term satisfaction as the test of truth. This predisposition inevitably blurred his analysis of knowledge in conduct and the nature of the idea. For all of his analysis of the self, James's individual remained a soul in his article on the moral philosopher, and even in his celebrated chapter on habit. It entered in advance of the situation it helped to determine. It carried standards and criteria within itself. It was still the American individual that had fashioned the ecclesiastical and political community within which it lived, though James was a New Englander and no pioneer and lived in a community old enough to have its own culture, though it was a culture that was in great measure sterile in the development of the larger American community. His individual had that in him which was not fashioned in the living process in which his intelligence arose.

John Dewey was also a New Englander like James, and like Royce he was intellectually bred in the idealisms of Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, and can say today that "If there be a synthesis in ultimate Being of the realities which can be cognitively substantiated and of meanings which should command our highest admiration and approval, then concrete phenomena... ought to be capable of being exhibited as definite manifestations of the eternal union of the real-ideal," though today this is for Dewey a condition contrary to fact. But while Royce went to Harvard, Dewey went to the University of Michigan. Both Dewey and Royce published psychologies, though Dewey's came earlier in the development of his thought, and constituted in its treatment of the will and the emotions an early step in the formulation of conduct as the field of experience. Like Royce, Dewey was profoundly influenced by James's psychology, though as I have already indicated it suggested to him a method of interpretation of knowledge rather than a metaphysical problem to be worked out in Hegelian fashion. As in the case of James, it was biological science with its dominant conception of evolution that offered him a process within which to analyze and place intelligence.

It would, however, be an error to ascribe to James's *Psychology* the starting-point of Dewey's independent thought. In his *Outline of Ethics*, 1891, in which are to be found the essential positions of his ethical doctrine, among his many acknowledgments to English idealistic and naturalistic writers, he makes no reference to James, and yet here we find him denouncing the "fallacy that moral action means something more than action itself." Here we find the "one moral reality — the full free play of human life," the "analysis of individuality into function including capacity and environment," and the "idea of desire as the ideal activity in contrast with actual possession." How far he had traveled from his earlier position appears from the following passage from an article printed in 1884. He there "declares that God, as the perfect Personality or Will, is the only Reality, and the source of all activity. It is therefore the source of all activity of the individual personality. The Perfect Will is the motive, source, and realization of the life of the individual. He has renounced his own particular life as an unreality; he has asserted that the sole reality is the universal Will, and in that reality all his actions take place." In the *Outline of Ethics* we find the will, the idea, and the consequences all placed inside of the act, and the act itself placed only within the larger activity of the individual in society.

All reference of knowledge to a pre-existent ideal reality has disappeared. Knowledge refers to consequences imagined or experienced. Dewey passed out of his idealistic position by the way of the psychological analysis of the moral act. He occupied himself with the function of knowledge in doing. Instead of finding in the conflict of aims a problem, that knowledge can solve only in an absolute will, it becomes the immediate moral problem of the individual within the act. And his next step was by way of the school, in which he subjected his philosophy to the more severe test of actual accomplishments in education. He accepted the headship of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Chicago upon the condition that it should include that of Education; and his earliest



steps in the new field were in the establishment of the Experimental School, in which the education of the children was worked out upon the principle that knowing is a part of doing.

Now, pragmatism is recognized as a part of a current of thought which has had other expressions in other communities. Elsewhere in particular it has been allied with an anti-intellectualism, as for example in Bergson's philosophy. Two characteristics of this phase of modern thought may be noted, one the reference of thought to conduct, and the other the inclusion of intelligence within the sweep of biologic evolution. That these should lead to anti-intellectualism implies that intelligence and thought are not so native to human conduct and behavior even in their most elaborate social expressions, but that they deform experience. In other words, it is assumed that thought has the function not only of facilitating conduct but also of presenting reality as well. Even a theory of knowledge cannot serve two masters, and it was the task of freeing cognition from the shackles of a divided allegiance which Dewey accomplished in his *Essays in Experimental Logic*. Here Peirce's laboratory habit of mind follows through the whole process of knowing. In particular it is exhibited in elaboration of the problem from which it starts upon its experimental undertaking. In isolating the sense data, and the relations which the conflicts of experience have shaken out, in sharp logical distinction from the non-problematic world within which it arises, Dewey exempts the logical process that is seeking knowledge from any responsibility for the world that has set the problem. It frees having, enjoying, and suffering and the percept, as the statement of the object that is simply there, from a consciousness of, and the way is open for the more complete analysis of consciousness in *Experience and Nature*. The gist of it is that what had been already achieved for the moral act was now established for the act of knowing, and if cognition is not responsible for the world that sets the problem, still less is it called upon to read back into a pre-existent reality its accomplishment in the solution of

its problem, the "fallacy of conversion of eventual functions into antecedent existence." In *Experience and Nature* the parallelism between the analysis of the moral act and the cognitive act is completed. As it is shown in the former that it is in social participation that the peculiar character of the moral appears, so in the latter it is through the participation that is involved in communication, and hence in thought itself, that meaning arises. There is a grand simplicity in the advance from the *Syllabus* and *Outline of Ethics* in 1891 to *Experience and Nature* and *The Quest for Certainty* in 1929. As Whitehead has admonished us, "Seek for simplicity and then distrust it." It is a wise admonition, but before we address ourselves to the subtle problems and the difficult readjustments which any great reconstruction bring with it, we may stop to enjoy the sense of enormous relief with which one completes *The Quest for Certainty*. That baffled sense of the philosophic squirrel running a ceaseless dialectical round within his cage, that despairing sense of the philosophic Sisyphus vainly striving to roll the heavily weighted world of his reflection up into a pre-existent reality — these drop away and the philosopher can face about toward the future and join in the scientist's adventure. Not the eagerness to grapple with a dialectical opponent, not the sense of escape into a city not built with hands, but the sense of freedom for action — it is a novel attitude in which to lay down a profound philosophic treatise.

It has been a term of opprobrium that has been cast upon Dewey's doctrine that it is the philosophy of American practicality. But now that the world has become somewhat more respectful of us and more curious about us it may not, perhaps, be opprobrious to recognize the relation of Dewey's habitat to his philosophic output. In the first place, it was beyond the Alleghenies that he formulated his problem and worked out the essentials of his doctrine. Though Hegelianism flourished in a small and somewhat Teutonic group in St. Louis, which was not without its repercussions in America, as witness both Royce and Dewey, it was Royce who established the absolute idealisms in



American thought by making them a part of culture. There was no sublimation of the individual in the structure of society in America which could make absolute idealism an outgrowth of American consciousness; but as a part of culture it took its place, and the center of gravity of this culture was in New England. I have indicated what seems to me the important characteristic of American life, the freedom, within certain rather rigid but very wide boundaries, to work out immediate politics and business with no reverential sense of a pre-existing social order within which they must take their place and whose values they must preserve. We refer to this as individualism, perhaps uncouth, but unafraid. In its finest form it was embodied in William James, for it was in him refined by a genuine native culture. Now there is only one way in which such an individualism can be brought under constructive criticism, and that is by bringing

the individual to state his ends and purposes in terms of the social means he is using. You cannot get at him with an ethics from above, you *can* reach him by an ethics that is simply the development of the intelligence implicit in his act. I take it that it is such an implicit intelligence that has been responsible for the steady development and social integration that has taken place in the American community, with little leadership and almost entirely without ideas. It is hardly necessary to point out that John Dewey's philosophy, with its insistence upon the statement of the end in the terms of the means, is the developed method of that implicit intelligence in the mind of the American community. And for such an implicit intelligence there is no other test of moral and intellectual hypotheses except that they work. In the profoundest sense John Dewey is the philosopher of America.

# Charles Sanders Peirce

## (1839-1914)

PEIRCE, born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1839, was the son of Benjamin Peirce, who was the leading mathematician of his time. The boy received a rigorous education from his father. He himself said that he was brought up in a laboratory, and he alternated all his life between science and philosophy, though his heart was more in the latter. In 1861 he joined the U.S. Coast Survey and remained with them until he retired in 1887. After that he lived in seclusion until his death in 1914. Although his life was marked by poverty and domestic troubles he never allowed either to interfere with his philosophical writings. He was able to publish only a little during his lifetime, but in recent years six volumes of his works have been brought out by Harvard University. The influence of Peirce has grown steadily since his death; today philosophers of almost every school admit their debt to him for ideas which have little or no connection with his theory of pragmatic definition.

### PREFACE TO PRINCIPLES OF PHILOSOPHY<sup>1</sup>

1. To ERECT a philosophical edifice that shall outlast the vicissitudes of time, my care must be, not so much to set each brick with nicest accuracy, as to lay the foundations deep and massive. Aristotle builded upon a few deliberately chosen concepts — such as matter and form, act and power — very broad, and in their outlines vague and rough, but solid, unshakable, and not easily undermined; and thence it has come to pass that Aristotelianism is babbled in every nursery, that “English Common Sense,” for example, is thoroughly peripatetic, and that ordinary men live so completely within the house of the

Stagyrite that whatever they see out of the windows appears to them incomprehensible and metaphysical. Long it has been only too manifest that, fondly habituated though we be to it, the old structure will not do for modern needs; and accordingly, under Descartes, Hobbes, Kant, and others, repairs, alterations, and partial demolitions have been carried on for the last three centuries. One system, also, stands upon its own ground; I mean the new Schelling-Hegel mansion, lately run up in the German taste, but with such oversights in its construction that, although brand new, it is already pro-

<sup>1</sup> *Collected Papers*, vol. 1, *Principles of Philosophy*, Preface: paragraphs 126-29, 141-75. Edited by Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss. Cambridge: 1931. Reprinted with the permission of the Harvard University Press.

nounced uninhabitable. The undertaking which this volume inaugurates is to make a philosophy like that of Aristotle, that is to say, to outline a theory so comprehensive that, for a long time to come, the entire work of human reason, in philosophy of every school and kind, in mathematics, in psychology, in physical science, in history, in sociology, and in whatever other department there may be, shall appear as the filling up of its details. The first step toward this is to find simple concepts applicable to every subject.

2. But before all else, let me make the acquaintance of my reader, and express my sincere esteem for him and the deep pleasure it is to me to address one so wise and so patient. I know his character pretty well, for both the subject and the style of this book ensure his being one out of millions. He will comprehend that it has not been written for the purpose of confirming him in his preconceived opinions, and he would not take the trouble to read it if it had. He is prepared to meet with propositions that he is inclined at first to dissent from; and he looks to being convinced that some of them are true, after all. He will reflect, too, that the thinking and writing of this book has taken, I won't say how long, quite certainly more than a quarter of an hour, and consequently fundamental objections of so obvious a nature that they must strike everyone instantaneously will have occurred to the author, although the replies to them may not be of that kind whose full force can be instantly apprehended.

3. The reader has a right to know how the author's opinions were formed. Not, of course, that he is expected to accept any conclusions which are not borne out by argument. But in discussions of extreme difficulty, like these, when good judgment is a factor, and pure ratiocination is not everything, it is prudent to take every element into consideration. From the moment when I could think at all, until now, about forty years, I have been diligently and incessantly occupied with the study of methods [of] inquiry, both those which have been and are pursued and those which ought to be pur-

sued. For ten years before this study began, I had been in training in the chemical laboratory. I was thoroughly grounded not only in all that was then known of physics and chemistry, but also in the way in which those who were successfully advancing knowledge proceeded. I have paid the most attention to the methods of the most exact sciences, have intimately communed with some of the greatest minds of our times in physical science, and have myself made positive contributions — none of them of any very great importance, perhaps — in mathematics, gravitation, optics, chemistry, astronomy, etc. I am saturated, through and through, with the spirit of the physical sciences. I have been a great student of logic, having read everything of any importance on the subject, devoting a great deal of time to medieval thought, without neglecting the works of the Greeks, the English, the Germans, the French, etc., and have produced systems of my own both in deductive and in inductive logic. In metaphysics, my training has been less systematic; yet I have read and deeply pondered upon all the main systems, never being satisfied until I was able to think about them as their own advocates thought.

4. The first strictly philosophical books that I read were of the classical German schools; and I became so deeply imbued with many of their ways of thinking that I have never been able to disabuse myself of them. Yet my attitude was always that of a dweller in a laboratory, eager only to learn what I did not yet know, and not that of philosophers bred in theological seminaries, whose ruling impulse is to teach what they hold to be infallibly true. I devoted two hours a day to the study of Kant's *Critic of the Pure Reason* for more than three years, until I almost knew the whole book by heart, and had critically examined every section of it. For about two years, I had long and almost daily discussions with Chauncey Wright, one of the most acute of the followers of J. S. Mill.

5. The effect of these studies was that I came to hold the classical German philosophy to be, upon its argumentative side, of little weight; although I esteem it, perhaps

am too partial to it, as a rich mine of philosophical suggestions. The English philosophy, meagre and crude, as it is, in its conceptions, proceeds by surer methods and more accurate logic. The doctrine of the association of ideas is, to my thinking, the finest piece of philosophical work of the prescientific ages. Yet I can but pronounce English sensationalism to be entirely destitute of any solid bottom. From the evolutionary philosophers, I have learned little; although I admit that, however hurriedly their theories have been knocked together, and however antiquated and ignorant Spencer's *First Principles* and general doctrines, yet they are under the guidance of a great and true idea, and are developing it by methods that are in their main features sound and scientific.

6. The works of Duns Scotus have strongly influenced me. If his logic and metaphysics, not slavishly worshipped, but torn away from its medievalism, be adapted to modern cul-

ture, under continual wholesome reminders of nominalistic criticisms, I am convinced that it will go far toward supplying the philosophy which is best to harmonize with physical science. But other conceptions have to be drawn from the history of science and from mathematics.

7. Thus, in brief, my philosophy may be described as the attempt of a physicist to make such conjecture as to the constitution of the universe as the methods of science may permit, with the aid of all that has been done by previous philosophers. I shall support my propositions by such arguments as I can. Demonstrative proof is not to be thought of. The demonstrations of the metaphysicians are all moonshine. The best that can be done is to supply a hypothesis, not devoid of all likelihood, in the general line of growth of scientific ideas, and capable of being verified or refuted by future observers.

## NOTES ON SCIENTIFIC PHILOSOPHY

### LABORATORY AND SEMINARY PHILOSOPHIES

126. THE kind of philosophy which interests me and must, I think, interest everybody is that philosophy which uses the most rational methods it can devise, for finding out the little that can as yet be found out about the universe of mind and matter from those observations which every person can make in every hour of his waking life. It will not include matters which are more conveniently studied by students of special sciences, such as psychology. Thus, everybody has remarked that there are four prominent qualities of the sense of taste, sweet, sour, salt, and bitter. But there may be other tastes, not so readily made out without special study; and in any case tastes are conveniently studied in connection with flavors and odors, which make a difficult experimental inquiry. Besides, the four tastes are altogether special and throw no light on the problems which, on account of their extreme generality, will naturally be examined by a class of research-

ers of entirely different aptitudes from those which adapt men to the discovery of recondite facts.

127. If anybody asks what there is in the study of obvious phenomena to make it particularly interesting, I will give two answers. The first is the one which seems to me the strongest; the other is that which nobody can fail to feel the force of. The first answer is that the spirit in which, as it seems to me, philosophy ought to be studied is the spirit in which every branch of science ought to be studied; namely, the spirit of joy in learning ourselves and in making others acquainted with the glories of God. Each person will feel this joy most in the particular branch of science to which his faculties are best adapted. It is not a sin to have no taste for philosophy as I define philosophy. As a matter of fact, however, almost everybody does feel an interest in philosophical problems, especially at that time of life at which he is spoiling for an intellectual tussle.

128. It is true that philosophy is in a lamentably crude condition at present; that very little is really established about it; while most philosophers set up a pretension of knowing all there is to know — a pretension calculated to disgust anybody who is at home in any real science. But all we have to do is to turn our backs upon all such truly vicious conduct, and we shall find ourselves enjoying the advantages of having an almost virgin soil to till, where a given amount of really scientific work will bring in an extraordinary harvest, and that a harvest of very fundamental truth of exceptional value from every point of view.

129. This consideration touches upon the second reason for studying laboratory-philosophy (as contradistinguished from seminary-philosophy). It is that the special sciences are obliged to take for granted a number of most important propositions, because their ways of working afford no means of bringing these propositions to the test. In short, they always rest upon metaphysics. At one time, for example, we find physicists, Kelvin, Maxwell and others, assuming that a body cannot act where it is not, meaning by "where it is not" where its lines of force do not centre. At another time, we find them assuming that the laws of mechanics (including the principles of metric geometry) hold good for the smallest corpuscles. Now, it is one thing to infer from the laws of little things how great things, that consist of little things, will act; but it is quite a different thing to infer from the phenomena presented by great things how single things billions of times smaller will act. It is like inferring that because in any country one man in so many will commit suicide, therefore every individual, once in such a period of time, will make an attempt at

suicide. The psychical sciences, especially psychology, are, if possible, even more necessitated to assume general principles that cannot be proved or disproved by their ordinary methods of work. The philosopher alone is equipped with the facilities for examining such "axioms" and for determining the degree to which confidence may safely be reposed in them. Find a scientific man who proposes to get along without any metaphysics — not by any means every man who holds the ordinary reasonings of metaphysicians in scorn — and you have found one whose doctrines are thoroughly vitiated by the crude and uncriticized metaphysics with which they are packed. We must philosophize, said the great naturalist Aristotle — if only to avoid philosophizing. Every man of us has a metaphysics, and has to have one; and it will influence his life greatly. Far better, then, that that metaphysics should be criticized and not be allowed to run loose. A man may say, "I will content myself with common sense." I, for one, am with him there, in the main. I shall show why I do not think there can be any *direct* profit in going behind common sense — meaning by common sense those ideas and beliefs that man's situation absolutely forces upon him. We shall later see more definitely what is meant. I agree, for example, that it is better to recognize that some things are red and some others blue, in the teeth of what optical philosophers say, that it is merely that some things are resonant to shorter ether waves and some to longer ones. But the difficulty is to determine what really is and what is not the authoritative decision of common sense and what is merely *obiter dictum*. In short, there is no escape from the need of a critical examination of "first principles."

## FALLIBILISM, CONTINUITY, AND EVOLUTION

141. ALL positive reasoning is of the nature of judging the proportion of something in a whole collection by the proportion found in a sample. Accordingly, there are three things

to which we can never hope to attain by reasoning, namely, absolute certainty, absolute exactitude, absolute universality. We cannot be absolutely certain that our conclusions

are even approximately true; for the sample may be utterly unlike the unsampled part of the collection. We cannot pretend to be even probably exact; because the sample consists of but a finite number of instances and only admits special values of the proportion sought. Finally, even if we could ascertain with absolute certainty and exactness that the ratio of sinful men to all men was as 1 to 1; still among the infinite generations of men there would be room for any finite number of sinless men without violating the proportion. The case is the same with a seven-legged calf.

142. Now if exactitude, certitude, and universality are not to be attained by reasoning, there is certainly no other means by which they can be reached.

143. Somebody will suggest *revelation*. There are scientists and people influenced by science who laugh at revelation; and certainly science has taught us to look at testimony in such a light that the whole theological doctrine of the "Evidences" seems pretty weak. However, I do not think it is philosophical to reject the possibility of a revelation. Still, granting that, I declare as a logician that revealed truths — that is, truths which have nothing in their favor but revelations made to a few individuals — constitute by far the most uncertain class of truths there are. There is here no question of universality; for revelation is itself sporadic and miraculous. There is no question of mathematical exactitude; for no revelation makes any pretension to that character. But it does pretend to be *certain*; and against that there are three conclusive objections. First, we never can be absolutely certain that any given deliverance really is inspired; for that can only be established by reasoning. We cannot even prove it with any very high degree of probability. Second, even if it is inspired, we cannot be sure, or nearly sure, that the statement is true. We know that one of the commandments was in one of the Bibles printed with [out] a *not* in it. All inspired matter has been subject to human distortion or coloring. Besides, we cannot penetrate the counsels of the Most High, or lay down anything as a principle that would

govern his conduct. We do not know his inscrutable purposes, nor can we comprehend his plans. We cannot tell but he might see fit to inspire his servants with errors. In the third place, a truth which rests on the authority of inspiration only is of a somewhat incomprehensible nature; and we never can be sure that we rightly comprehend it. As there is no way of evading these difficulties, I say that revelation, far from affording us any certainty, gives results less certain than other sources of information. This would be so even if revelation were much plainer than it is.

144. But, it will be said, you forget the laws which are known to us *a priori*, the axioms of geometry, the principles of logic, the maxims of *causality*, and the like. Those are absolutely certain, without exception, and exact. To this I reply that it seems to me there is the most positive historic proof that innate truths are particularly uncertain and mixed up with error, and therefore *a fortiori* not without exception. This historical proof is, of course, not infallible; but it is very strong. Therefore, I ask *how do you know* that a *priori* truth is certain, exceptionless, and exact? You cannot know it by *reasoning*. For that would be subject to uncertainty and inexactitude. Then, it must amount to this that you know it *a priori*; that is, you take *a priori* judgments at their own valuation, without criticism or credentials. That is barring the gate of inquiry.

145. Ah! but it will be said, you forget direct experience. Direct experience is neither certain nor uncertain, because it affirms nothing — it just *is*. There are delusions, hallucinations, dreams. But there is no mistake that such things really do appear, and direct experience means simply the appearance. It involves no error, because it testifies to nothing but its own appearance. For the same reason, it affords no certainty. It is not *exact*, because it leaves much vague; though it is not *inexact* either; that is, it has no false exactitude.

146. All this is true of direct experience at its first presentation. But when it comes up to be criticized it is past, itself, and is represented by *memory*. Now the deceptions and inexactitude of memory are proverbial.

147. On the whole, then, we cannot in any way reach perfect certitude nor exactitude. We never can be absolutely sure of anything, nor can we with any probability ascertain the exact value of any measure or general ratio.

This is my conclusion, after many years study of the logic of science; and it is the conclusion which others, of very different cast of mind, have come to, likewise. I believe I may say there is no tenable opinion regarding human knowledge which does not legitimately lead to this corollary. Certainly there is nothing new in it; and many of the greatest minds of all time have held it for true.

148. Indeed, most everybody will admit it until he begins to see what is involved in the admission — and then most people will draw back. It will not be admitted by persons utterly incapable of philosophical reflection. It will not be fully admitted by masterful minds developed exclusively in the direction of action and accustomed to claim practical infallibility in matters of business. These men will admit the incurable fallibility of all opinions readily enough; only, they will always make exception of their own. The doctrine of fallibilism will also be denied by those who fear its consequences for science, for religion, and for morality. But I will take leave to say to these highly conservative gentlemen that however competent they may be to direct the affairs of a church or other corporation, they had better not try to manage science in that way. Conservatism — in the sense of a dread of consequences — is altogether out of place in science — which has on the contrary always been forwarded by radicals and radicalism, in the sense of the eagerness to carry consequences to their extremes. Not the radicalism that is cocksure, however, but the *radicalism that tries experiments*. Indeed, it is precisely among men animated by the spirit of science that the doctrine of fallibilism will find supporters.

149. Still, even such a man as that may well ask whether I propose to say that it is not quite certain that twice two are four — and that it is even not probably quite exact!

But it would be quite misunderstanding the doctrine of fallibilism to suppose that it means that twice two is probably not exactly four. As I have already remarked, it is not my purpose to doubt that people can usually *count* with accuracy. Nor does fallibilism say that men cannot attain a sure knowledge of the creations of their own minds. It neither affirms nor denies that. It only says that people cannot attain absolute certainty concerning questions of fact. Numbers are merely a system of names devised by men for the purpose of counting. It is a matter of real fact to say that in a certain room there are two persons. It is a matter of fact to say that each person has two eyes. It is a matter of fact to say that there are four eyes in the room. But to say that *if* there are two persons and each person has two eyes there *will be* four eyes is not a statement of fact, but a statement about the system of numbers which is our own creation.

150. Still, if the matter is pressed let me ask whether any individual here present thinks there is no room for possible doubt that twice two is four?

What do *you* think? You have heard of hypnotism. You know how common it is. You know that about one man in *twenty* is capable of being put into a condition in which he holds the most ridiculous nonsense for unquestionable truth. How does any individual here know but that I am a hypnotist and that when he comes out of my influence he may see that twice two is four is merely his distorted idea; that in fact everybody knows it isn't so? Suppose the individual I am addressing to be enormously wealthy. Then I ask: "Would you, in view of this possibility — or with the possibility that you are seized with temporary insanity, risk your entire fortune this minute against one cent, on the truth of twice two being four?" You certainly ought not to do so; for you could not go on making very many millions of such bets before you would *lose*! Why, according to my estimate of probabilities there is not a single truth of science upon which we ought to bet more than about a million of millions to one — and that truth will be a general one and not a special fact.

People say, "Such a thing is as certain as that the sun will rise tomorrow!" I like that phrase for its great moderation because it is infinitely far from certain that the sun will rise tomorrow.

151. To return to our friends the Conservatives; these ladies and gentlemen will tell me this doctrine of fallibilism can never be admitted because the consequences from it would undermine Religion. I can only say I am very sorry. The doctrine is true; — without claiming absolute certainty for it, it is *substantially* unassailable. And if its consequences are antagonistic to religion, so much the worse for religion. At the same time, I do not believe they are so antagonistic. The dogmas of a church may be infallible — infallible in the sense in which it is infallibly true that it is wrong to murder and steal — practically and substantially infallible. But what use a church could make of a mathematical infallibility, I fail to see. *Messieurs et Mesdames les conservateurs* have generally taken the lead in determining what the church should say to the novelties of science; and I don't think they have managed the business with very distinguished success so far. They have begun by recoiling with horror from the alleged heresies — about the rotundity of the earth, about its rotation, about geology, about Egyptian history, and so forth — and they have ended by declaring that the church never breathed a single word against any of these truths of science. Perhaps it be just so with fallibility. For the present those knowing in divine things insist that infallibility is the prerogative of the church, but maybe by and by we shall be told that this infallibility had always been taken in an *ecclesiastical sense*. And that will be *true*, too. I should not wonder if the churches were to be quite agile in reformed teachings during the coming thirty years. Even one that mainly gathers in the very ignorant and the very rich may feel young blood in its veins.

152. But doubtless many of you will say, as many most intelligent people have said, Oh, we grant your *fallibilism* to the extent you insist upon it. It is nothing new. Franklin said a century ago that nothing

was certain. We will grant it would be foolish to bet ten years' expenditure of the United States Government against one cent upon any fact whatever. But practically speaking many things are substantially certain. So, after all, of what importance is your *fallibilism*?

We come then to this question: Of what importance is it? Let us see.

153. How *can* such a little thing be of importance, you will ask? I answer: After all there is a difference between something and nothing. If a metaphysical theory has come into general vogue, which can rest on nothing in the world but the assumption that absolute exactitude and certitude are to be attained, and if that metaphysics leaves us unprovided with pigeon-holes in which to file important facts, so that they have to be thrown in the fire — or, to resume our previous figure, if that metaphysical theory seriously blocks the road of inquiry — then it is comprehensible that the little difference between a degree of evidence extremely high and absolute certainty should after all be of great importance as removing a mote from our eye.

154. Let us look, then, at two or three of the grandest results of science and see whether they appear any different from a fallibilist standpoint from what they would to an infallibilist.

Three of the leading conceptions of science may be glanced at — I mean the ideas of force, of continuity, and of evolution.

155. ... The fourth law of motion was developed about forty years ago by Helmholtz and others. It is called the law of the conservation of energy; but in my opinion that is a very misleading name, implying a peculiar aspect of the law under which the real fact at the bottom of it is not clearly brought out. It is therefore not suitable for an abstract and general statement, although it is a point of view which is very serviceable for many practical applications. But the law generally stated is that the changes in the velocities of particles depend exclusively on their relative positions.

It is not necessary now to examine these laws with technical accuracy. It is sufficient to notice that they leave the poor little par-



ticle no option at all. Under given circumstances his motion is precisely laid out for him.

We can from the nature of things have no evidence at all tending to show that these laws are absolutely exact. But in some single cases we can see that the approximation to exactitude is quite wonderful.

These laws have had a very wonderful effect upon physical sciences, because they have shown the very high degree of exactitude with which nature acts — at least, in simple configurations. But, as I said before, the logic of the case affords us not one scintilla of reason to think that this exactitude is perfect.

156. The illustrious Phoenix [G. H. Derby], you remember, wrote a series of lectures on astronomy to be delivered at the Lowell Institute in Boston. But owing to the unexpected circumstance of his not being invited to give any lectures at that Institution, they were ultimately published in the *San Diego Herald*. In those lectures in treating of the sun he mentions how it once stood still at the command of Joshua. But, says he, I never could help thinking that it might have wiggled a very little when Joshua was not looking directly at it. The question is whether particles may not spontaneously swerve by a very little — less than we can perceive — from the exact requirements of the laws of mechanics. We cannot possibly have a right to deny this. For such a denial would be a claim to absolute exactitude of knowledge. On the other hand, we never can have any right to suppose that any observed phenomenon is simply a sporadic spontaneous irregularity. For the only justification we can have for supposing anything we don't see is that it would explain how an observed fact could result from the ordinary course of things. Now, to suppose a thing sporadic, spontaneous, irregular, is to suppose it departs from the ordinary course of things. That is blocking the road of inquiry; it is supposing the thing inexplicable, when a supposition can only be justified by its affording an explanation.

157. But we may find a general class of phenomena, forming a part of the general course of things, which are explicable not as an ir-

regularity, but as the resultant effect of a whole class of irregularities.

Physicists often resort to this kind of explanation to account for phenomena which appear to violate the law of the conservation of energy. The general properties of gases are explained by supposing the molecules are moving about in every direction in the most diverse possible ways. Here, it is true, it is supposed that there is only so much irregularity as the laws of mechanics permit — but the principle is there of explaining a general phenomenon by the statistical regularities that exist among irregularities.

158. As there is nothing to show that there is not a certain amount of absolute spontaneity in nature, despite all laws, our metaphysical pigeon-holes should not be so limited as to exclude this hypothesis, provided any general phenomena should appear which might be explained by such spontaneity.

159. Now, in my opinion there are several such general phenomena. Of these I will at this moment instance but one.

It is *the* most obtrusive character of nature. It is so obvious that you will hardly know at first what it is I mean. It is curious how certain facts escape us because they are so pervading and ubiquitous; just as the ancients imagined the music of the spheres was not heard because it was heard all the time. But will not somebody kindly tell the rest of the audience what is the most marked and obtrusive character of nature? Of course, I mean the variety of nature.

160. Now I don't know that it is logically accurate to say that this marvelous and infinite diversity and manifoldness of things is a sign of spontaneity. I am a logical analyst by long training, you know, and to say this is a manifestation of spontaneity seems to me faulty analysis. I would rather say it *is* spontaneity. I don't know what you can make out of the meaning of spontaneity but newness, freshness, and diversity.

161. Let me ask you a little question. Can the operation of *law* create diversity where there was no diversity before? Obviously not; under given circumstances mechanical law prescribes *one* determinate result.

I could easily prove this by the principles of analytical mechanics. But that is needless. You can see for yourselves that law prescribes like results under like circumstances. That is what the word *law* implies. So then, all this exuberant diversity of nature cannot be the result of law. Now what is spontaneity? It is the character of not resulting by law from something antecedent.

162. Thus, the universe is *not* a mere mechanical result of the operation of blind law. The most obvious of all its characters cannot be so explained. It is the multitudinous facts of all experience that show us this; but that which has opened our eyes to these facts is the principle of fallibilism. Those who fail to appreciate the importance of fallibilism reason: we see these laws of mechanics; we see how extremely closely they have been verified in some cases. We suppose that what we haven't examined is like what we have examined, and that these laws are absolute, and the whole universe is a boundless machine working by the blind laws of mechanics. This is a philosophy which leaves no room for a God! No, indeed! It leaves even human consciousness, which cannot well be denied to exist, as a perfectly idle and functionless *flâneur* in the world, with no possible influence upon anything — not even upon itself. Now will you tell me that this fallibilism amounts to nothing?

163. But in order really to see all there is in the doctrine of fallibilism, it is necessary to introduce the idea of continuity, or unbrokenness. This is the leading idea of the differential calculus and of all the useful branches of mathematics; it plays a great part in all scientific thought, and the greater the more scientific that thought is, and it is the master key which adepts tell us unlocks the arcana of philosophy.

164. We all have some idea of continuity. Continuity is fluidity, the merging of part into part. But to achieve a really distinct and adequate conception of it is a difficult task, which with all the aids possible must for the most acute and most logically trained intellect require days of severe thought. If I were to attempt to give you any logical conception of it, I should only make you dizzy to no

purpose. I may say this, however. I draw a line. Now, the points on that line form a continuous series. If I take any two points on that line, however close together, other points there are lying between them. If that were not so, the series of points would not be continuous. It might be so, even if the series of points were not continuous. . . .

165. You will readily see that the idea of continuity involves the idea of infinity. Now, the nominalists tell us that we cannot reason about infinity, or that we cannot reason about it *mathematically*. Nothing can be more false. Nominalists cannot reason about infinity, because they do not reason logically about anything. Their reasoning consists of performing certain processes which they have found worked well — without having any insight into the conditions of their working well. This is not logical reasoning. It naturally fails when infinity is involved; because they reason about infinity as if it were finite. But to a logical reasoner, reasoning about infinity is decidedly simpler than reasoning about finite quantity.

166. There is one property of a continuous expanse that I must mention, though I cannot venture to trouble you with the demonstration of it. It is that in a continuous expanse, say a continuous line, there are continuous lines infinitely short. In fact, the whole line is made up of such infinitesimal parts. The property of these infinitely small spaces is — I regret the abstruseness of what I am going to say, but I cannot help it — the property which distinguishes these infinitesimal distances is that a certain mode of reasoning which holds good of all finite quantities and of some that are not finite does not hold good of them. Namely, mark any point on the line A. Suppose that point to have any character; suppose, for instance, it is *blue*. Now suppose we lay down the rule that every point within an inch of a blue point shall be painted blue. Obviously, the consequence will be that the whole line will have to be blue. But this reasoning does not hold good of infinitesimal distances. After the point A has been painted blue, the rule that every point infinitesimally near to a blue point shall be painted blue will not

necessarily result in making the whole blue. Continuity involves infinity in the strictest sense, and infinity even in a less strict sense goes beyond the possibility of direct experience.

167. Can we, then, ever be sure that anything in the real world is continuous? Of course, I am not asking for an absolute certainty; but can we ever say that it is so with any ordinary degree of security? This is a vitally important question. I think that we have one positive direct evidence of continuity and on the first line but one. It is this. We are immediately aware only of our present feelings — not of the future, nor of the past. The past is known to us by present memory, the future by present suggestion. But before we can interpret the memory or the suggestion, they are past; before we can interpret the present feeling which means memory, or the present feeling that means suggestion, since that interpretation takes time, that feeling has ceased to be present and is now past. So we can reach no conclusion from the present but only from the past.

168. How do we know then on the whole that the past ever existed, that the future ever will exist? How do we know there ever was or ever will be anything but the present instant? Or stop: I must not say *we*. How do I know that anybody but myself ever existed or even I myself exist except for one single instant, the present, and that all this business is not an illusion from top to bottom? Answer: I don't know. But I am trying the hypothesis that it is real, which seems to work excellently so far. Now, if this is real, the past is really known to the present. How can it be known? Not by inference; because as we have just seen we can make no inference from the present, since it will be past before the inference gets drawn.

169. Then we must have an immediate consciousness of the past. But if we have an immediate consciousness of a state of consciousness past by one unit of time, and if that past state involved an immediate consciousness of a state then past by one unit, we now have an immediate consciousness of a state past by two units; and as this is equally true of all states, we have an immediate con-

sciousness of a state past by four units, by eight units, by sixteen units, etc.; in short we must have an immediate consciousness of every state of mind that is past by any finite number of units of time. But we certainly have not an immediate consciousness of our state of mind a year ago. So a year is more than any finite number of units of time in this system of measurement; or, in other words, there is a measure of time infinitely less than a year. Now, this is only true if the series be continuous. Here, then, it seems to me, we have positive and tremendously strong reason for believing that time really is continuous.

170. Equally conclusive and direct reason for thinking that space and degrees of quality and other things are continuous is to be found as for believing time to be so. Yet, the reality of continuity once admitted, reasons are there, divers reasons, some positive, others only formal, yet not contemptible, for admitting the continuity of all things. I am making a bore of myself and won't bother you with any full statement of these reasons, but will just indicate the nature of a few of them. Among formal reasons, there are such as these, that it is easier to reason about continuity than about discontinuity, so that it is a convenient assumption. Also, in case of ignorance it is best to adopt the hypothesis which leaves open the greatest field of possibility; now, a continuum is merely a discontinuous series with additional possibilities. Among positive reasons, we have that apparent analogy between time and space, between time and degree, and so on. There are various other positive reasons, but the weightiest consideration appears to me to be this: How can one mind act upon another mind? How can one particle of matter act upon another at a distance from it? The nominalists tell us this is an ultimate fact — it cannot be explained. Now, if this were meant in [a] merely practical sense, if it were only meant that we know that one thing does act on another but that how it takes place we cannot very well tell, up to date, I should have nothing to say, except to applaud the moderation and good logic of the statement. But this is not what is meant;

what is meant is that we come up, bump, against actions absolutely unintelligible and inexplicable, where human inquiries have to stop. Now that is a mere *theory*, and nothing can justify a theory except its explaining observed facts. It is a poor kind of theory which in place of performing this, the sole legitimate function of a theory, merely supposes the facts to be inexplicable. It is one of the peculiarities of nominalism that it is continually supposing things to be absolutely inexplicable. That blocks the road of inquiry. But if we adopt the theory of continuity we escape this illogical situation. We may then say that one portion of mind acts upon another, because it is in a measure immediately present to that other; just as we suppose that the infinitesimally past is in a measure present. And in like manner we may suppose that one portion of matter acts upon another because it is in a measure in the same place.

171. If I were to attempt to describe to you in full all the scientific beauty and truth that I find in the principle of continuity, I might say in the simple language of Matilda the Engaged, "the tomb would close over me e'er the entrancing topic were exhausted" — but not before my audience was exhausted. So I will just drop it here. Only, in doing so, let me call your attention to the natural affinity of this principle to the doctrine of fallibilism. The principle of continuity is the idea of fallibilism objectified. For fallibilism is the doctrine that our knowledge is never absolute but always swims, as it were in a continuum of uncertainty and of indeterminacy. Now, the doctrine of continuity is that *all things* so swim in continua.

172. The doctrine of continuity rests upon observed fact as we have seen. But what opens our eyes to the significance of that fact is fallibilism. The ordinary scientific infallibilist — of which sect Büchner in his *Kraft und Stoff* affords a fine example — cannot accept *synechism*, or the doctrine that all that exists is continuous — because he is committed to discontinuity in regard to all those things which he fancies he has exactly ascertained, and especially in regard to that part of his knowledge which he fancies he has

exactly ascertained to be *certain*. For where there is continuity, the exact ascertainment of real quantities is too obviously impossible. No sane man can dream that the ratio of the circumference to the diameter could be exactly ascertained by measurement. As to the quantities he has not yet exactly ascertained, the Büchnerite is naturally led to separate them into two distinct classes, those which may be ascertained hereafter (and there, as before, continuity must be excluded), and those absolutely unascertainable — and these in their utter and everlasting severance from the other class present a new breach of continuity. Thus scientific infallibilism draws down a veil before the eyes which prevents the evidences of continuity from being discerned.

But as soon as a man is fully impressed with the fact that absolute exactitude never can be known, he naturally asks whether there are any facts to show that hard discrete exactitude really exists. That suggestion lifts the edge of that curtain and he begins to see the clear daylight shining in from behind it.

173. But fallibilism cannot be appreciated in anything like its true significance until evolution has been considered. This is what the world has been most thinking of for the last forty years — though old enough is the general idea itself. Aristotle's philosophy, that dominated the world for so many ages and still in great measure tyrannizes over the thoughts of butchers and bakers that never heard of him — is but a metaphysical evolutionism.

174. Evolution means nothing but *growth* in the widest sense of that word. Reproduction, of course, is merely one of the incidents of growth. And what is growth? Not mere increase. Spencer says it is the passage from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous — or, if we prefer English to Spenserese — *diversification*. That is certainly an important factor of it. Spencer further says that it is a passage from the unorganized to the organized; but that part of the definition is so obscure that I will leave it aside for the present. But think what an astonishing idea this of *diversification* is! Is there such thing in nature

as increase of variety? Were things simpler, was variety less in the original nebula from which the solar system is supposed to have grown than it is now when the land and sea swarm with animal and vegetable forms with their intricate anatomies and still more wonderful economies? It would seem as if there were an increase in variety, would it not? And yet mechanical law, which the scientific infallibilist tells us is the only agency of nature, mechanical law can never produce diversification. That is a mathematical truth — a proposition of analytical mechanics; and anybody can see without any algebraical apparatus that mechanical law out of like antecedents can only produce like consequents. It is the very idea of law. So if observed facts point to real growth, they point to another agency, to spontaneity for which infallibilism provides no pigeon-hole. And what is meant by this passage from the less organized to the more organized? Does it mean a passage from the less bound together to the more bound together, the less connected to the more connected, the less regular to the more regular? How can the regularity of the world increase, if it has been absolutely perfect all the time?

175. . . . Once you have embraced the principle of continuity no kind of explanation of things will satisfy you except that they *grew*.

The infallibilist naturally thinks that everything always was substantially as it is now. Laws at any rate being absolute could not grow. They either always were, or they sprang instantaneously into being by a sudden fiat like the drill of a company of soldiers. This makes the laws of nature absolutely blind and inexplicable. Their why and wherefore can't be asked. This absolutely blocks the road of inquiry. The fallibilist won't do this. He asks, may these *forces* of nature not be somehow amenable to reason? May they not have naturally grown up? After all, there is no reason to think they are absolute. If all things are continuous, the universe must be undergoing a continuous growth from non-existence to existence. There is no difficulty in conceiving existence as a matter of degree. The reality of things consists in their persistent forcing themselves upon our recognition. If a thing has no such persistence, it is a mere dream. Reality, then, is persistence, is regularity. In the original chaos, where there was no regularity, there was no existence. It was all a confused dream. This we may suppose was in the infinitely distant past. But as things are getting more regular, more persistent, they are getting less dreamy and more real.

Fallibilism will at least provide a big pigeon-hole for facts bearing on that theory.

## HOW TO MAKE OUR IDEAS CLEAR<sup>1</sup>

### SECTION I. CLEARNESS AND DISTINCTNESS

388. WHOEVER has looked into a modern treatise on logic of the common sort will doubtless remember the two distinctions between *clear* and *obscure* conceptions, and between *distinct* and *confused* conceptions. They have lain in the books now for nigh two centuries, unimproved and unmodified, and are generally reckoned by logicians as among the gems of their doctrine.

389. A clear idea is defined as one which is so apprehended that it will be recognized

wherever it is met with, and so that no other will be mistaken for it. If it fails of this clearness, it is said to be obscure.

This is rather a neat bit of philosophical terminology; yet, since it is clearness that they were defining, I wish the logicians had made their definition a little more plain. Never to fail to recognize an idea, and under no circumstances to mistake another for it, let it come in how recondite a form it may, would indeed imply such prodigious force and clearness of intellect as is seldom met with in this world. On the other hand,

<sup>1</sup> *Collected Papers*, vol. v, paragraphs 388-402, *Pragmatism and Pragmaticism*, edited by Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss. Cambridge: 1934. Reprinted with the permission of the Harvard University Press.

merely to have such an acquaintance with the idea as to have become familiar with it, and to have lost all hesitancy in recognizing it in ordinary cases, hardly seems to deserve the name of clearness of apprehension, since after all it only amounts to a subjective feeling of mastery which may be entirely mistaken: I take it, however, that when the logicians speak of "clearness," they mean nothing more than such a familiarity with an idea, since they regard the quality as but a small merit, which needs to be supplemented by another, which they call *distinctness*.

390. A distinct idea is defined as one which contains nothing which is not clear. This is technical language, by the *contents* of an idea logicians understand whatever is contained in its definition. So that an idea is *distinctly* apprehended, according to them, when we can give a precise definition of it, in abstract terms. Here the professional logicians leave the subject; and I would not have troubled the reader with what they have to say, if it were not such a striking example of how they have been slumbering through ages of intellectual activity, listlessly disregarding the enginery of modern thought, and never dreaming of applying its lessons to the improvement of logic. It is easy to show that the doctrine that familiar use and abstract distinctness make the perfection of apprehension has its only true place in philosophies which have long been extinct; and it is now time to formulate the method of attaining to a more perfect clearness of thought, such as we see and admire in the thinkers of our own time.

391. When Descartes set about the reconstruction of philosophy, his first step was to (theoretically) permit skepticism and to discard the practice of the schoolmen of looking to authority as the ultimate source of truth. That done, he sought a more natural fountain of true principles, and thought he found it in the human mind; thus passing, in the directest way, from the method of authority to that of apriority, as described in my first paper. Self-consciousness was to furnish us with our fundamental truths, and to decide what was agreeable to reason. But since, evidently, not all ideas are true, he was led to note, as

the first condition of infallibility, that they must be clear. The distinction between an idea *seeming* clear and really being so never occurred to him. Trusting to introspection, as he did, even for a knowledge of external things, why should he question its testimony in respect to the contents of our own minds? But then, I suppose, seeing men, who seemed to be quite clear and positive, holding opposite opinions upon fundamental principles, he was further led to say that clearness of ideas is not sufficient, but that they need also to be distinct, i.e., to have nothing unclear about them. What he probably meant by this (for he did not explain himself with precision) was, that they must sustain the test of dialectical examination; that they must not only seem clear at the outset, but that discussion must never be able to bring to light points of obscurity connected with them.

392. Such was the distinction of Descartes, and one sees that it was precisely on the level of his philosophy. It was somewhat developed by Leibnitz. This great and singular genius was as remarkable for what he failed to see as for what he saw. That a piece of mechanism could not do work perpetually without being fed with power in some form was a thing perfectly apparent to him; yet he did not understand that the machinery of the mind can only transform knowledge, but never originate it, unless it be fed with facts of observation. He thus missed the most essential point of the Cartesian philosophy, which is, that to accept propositions which seem perfectly evident to us is a thing which, whether it be logical or illogical, we cannot help doing. Instead of regarding the matter in this way, he sought to reduce the first principles of science to two classes, those which cannot be denied without self-contradiction, and those which result from the principle of sufficient reason (of which more anon), and was apparently unaware of the great difference between his position and that of Descartes. So he reverted to the old trivialities of logic; and, above all, abstract definitions played a great part in his philosophy. It was quite natural, therefore, that on observing that the method of Descartes labored under the difficulty that we may seem to our-

selves to have clear apprehensions of ideas which in truth are very hazy, no better remedy occurred to him than to require an abstract definition of every important term. Accordingly, in adopting the distinction of *clear* and *distinct* notions, he described the latter quality as the clear apprehension of everything contained in the definition; and the books have ever since copied his words. There is no danger that his chimerical scheme will ever again be overvalued. Nothing new can ever be learned by analyzing definitions. Nevertheless, our existing beliefs can be set in order by this process, and order is an essential element of intellectual economy, as of every other. It may be acknowledged, therefore, that the books are right in making familiarity with a notion the first step toward clearness of apprehension, and the defining of it the second. But in omitting all mention of any higher perspicuity of thought, they simply mirror a philosophy which was exploded a hundred years ago. That much-admired "ornament of logic" — the doctrine of clearness and distinctness — may be pretty enough but it is high time to relegate to our cabinet of curiosities the antique *bijou*, and to wear about us something better adapted to modern uses.

393. The very first lesson that we have a right to demand that logic shall teach us is, how to make our ideas clear; and a most important one it is, depreciated only by minds who stand in need of it. To know what we think, to be masters of our own meaning, will make a solid foundation for great and weighty thought. It is most easily learned by those whose ideas are meagre and restricted; and far happier they than such as wallow helplessly in a rich mud of conceptions. A nation, it is true, may, in the course of generations, overcome the disadvantage of an excessive wealth of language and its natural concomitant, a vast, unfathomable deep of ideas. We may see it in history, slowly perfecting its literary forms, sloughing at length its metaphysics, and, by virtue of the untirable patience which is often a compensation, attaining great excellence in every branch of mental acquirement. The page of history is not yet unrolled that is to tell us whether such a people will

or will not in the long run prevail over one whose ideas (like the words of their language) are few, but which possesses a wonderful mastery over those which it has. For an individual, however, there can be no question that a few clear ideas are worth more than many confused ones. A young man would hardly be persuaded to sacrifice the greater part of his thoughts to save the rest; and the muddled head is the least apt to see the necessity of such a sacrifice. Him we can usually only commiserate, as a person with a congenital defect. Time will help him, but intellectual maturity with regard to clearness is apt to come rather late. This seems an unfortunate arrangement of Nature, inasmuch as clearness is of less use to a man settled in life, whose errors have in great measure had their effect, than it would be to one whose path lay before him. It is terrible to see how a single unclear idea, a single formula without meaning, lurking in a young man's head, will sometimes act like an obstruction of inert matter in an artery, hindering the nutrition of the brain, and condemning its victim to pine away in the fullness of his intellectual vigor and in the midst of intellectual plenty. Many a man has cherished for years as his hobby some vague shadow of an idea, too meaningless to be positively false; he has, nevertheless, passionately loved it, has made it his companion by day and by night, and has given to it his strength and his life, leaving all other occupations for its sake, and in short has lived with it and for it, until it has become, as it were, flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone; and then he has waked up some bright morning to find it gone, clean vanished away like the beautiful Melusina of the fable, and the essence of his life gone with it. I have myself known such a man; and who can tell how many histories of circle-squarers, metaphysicians, astrologers, and what not, may not be told in the old German [French!] story?

## SECTION 2. THE PRAGMATIC MAXIM

394. The principles set forth in the first part of this essay lead, at once, to a method of reaching a clearness of thought of far higher



grade than the "distinctness" of the logicians. It was there noticed that the action of thought is excited by the irritation of doubt, and ceases when belief is attained; so that the production of belief is the sole function of thought. All these words, however, are too strong for my purpose. It is as if I had described the phenomena as they appear under a mental microscope. Doubt and Belief, as the words are commonly employed, relate to religious or other grave discussions. But here I use them to designate the starting of any question, no matter how small or how great, and the resolution of it. If, for instance, in a horse-car, I pull out my purse and find a five-cent nickel and five coppers, I decide, while my hand is going to the purse, in which way I will pay my fare. To call such a question Doubt, and my decision Belief, is certainly to use words very disproportionate to the occasion. To speak of such a doubt as causing an irritation which needs to be appeased, suggests a temper which is uncomfortable to the verge of insanity. Yet, looking at the matter minutely, it must be admitted that, if there is the least hesitation as to whether I shall pay the five coppers or the nickel (as there will be sure to be, unless I act from some previously contracted habit in the matter), though irritation is too strong a word, yet I am excited to such small mental activity as may be necessary to deciding how I shall act. Most frequently doubts arise from some indecision, however momentary, in our action. Sometimes it is not so. I have, for example, to wait in a railway-station, and to pass the time I read the advertisements on the walls. I compare the advantages of different trains and different routes which I never expect to take, merely fancying myself to be in a state of hesitancy, because I am bored with having nothing to trouble me. Feigned hesitancy, whether feigned for mere amusement or with a lofty purpose, plays a great part in the production of scientific inquiry. However the doubt may originate, it stimulates the mind to an activity which may be slight or energetic, calm or turbulent. Images pass rapidly through consciousness, one incessantly melting into another, until at last, when all is over — it may be in a fraction of a

second, in an hour, or after long years — we find ourselves decided as to how we should act under such circumstances as those which occasioned our hesitation. In other words, we have attained belief.

395. In this process we observe two sorts of elements of consciousness, the distinction between which may best be made clear by means of an illustration. In a piece of music there are the separate notes, and there is the air. A single tone may be prolonged for an hour or a day, and it exists as perfectly in each second of that time as in the whole taken together; so that, as long as it is sounding, it might be present to a sense from which everything in the past was as completely absent as the future itself. But it is different with the air, the performance of which occupies a certain time, during the portions of which only portions of it are played. It consists in an orderliness in the succession of sounds which strike the ear at different times; and to perceive it there must be some continuity of consciousness which makes the events of a lapse of time present to us. We certainly only perceive the air by hearing the separate notes; yet we cannot be said to directly hear it, for we hear only what is present at the instant, and an orderliness of succession cannot exist in an instant. These two sorts of objects, what we are *immediately* conscious of and what we are *mediately* conscious of, are found in all consciousness. Some elements (the sensations) are completely present at every instant so long as they last, while others (like thought) are actions having beginning, middle, and end, and consist in a congruence in the succession of sensations which flow through the mind. They cannot be immediately present to us, but must cover some portion of the past or future. Thought is a thread of melody running through the succession of our sensations.

396. We may add that just as a piece of music may be written in parts, each part having its own air, so various systems of relationship of succession subsist together between the same sensations. These different systems are distinguished by having different motives, ideas, or functions. Thought is only one such system, for its sole motive, idea,



and function is to produce belief, and whatever does not concern that purpose belongs to some other system of relations. The action of thinking may incidentally have other results; it may serve to amuse us, for example, and among *dilettanti* it is not rare to find those who have so perverted thought to the purposes of pleasure that it seems to vex them to think that the questions upon which they delight to exercise it may ever get finally settled; and a positive discovery which takes a favorite subject out of the arena of literary debate is met with ill-concealed dislike. This disposition is the very debauchery of thought. But the soul and meaning of thought, abstracted from the other elements which accompany it, though it may be voluntarily thwarted, can never be made to direct itself toward anything but the production of belief. Thought in action has for its only possible motive the attainment of thought at rest; and whatever does not refer to belief is no part of the thought itself.

397. And what, then, is belief? It is the demi-cadence which closes a musical phrase in the symphony of our intellectual life. We have seen that it has just three properties: First, it is something that we are aware of; second, it appeases the irritation of doubt; and, third, it involves the establishment in our nature of a rule of action, or, say for short, a *habitus*. As it appeases the irritation of doubt, which is the motive for thinking, thought relaxes, and comes to rest for a moment when belief is reached. But, since belief is a rule for action, the application of which involves further doubt and further thought, at the same time that it is a stopping place, it is also a new starting-place for thought. That is why I have permitted myself to call it thought at rest, although thought is essentially an action. The *final* upshot of thinking is the exercise of volition, and of this thought no longer forms a part; but belief is only a stadium of mental action, an effect upon our nature due to thought, which will influence future thinking.

398. The essence of belief is the establishment of a *habitus*; and different beliefs are distinguished by the different modes of action to which they give rise. If beliefs do not differ

in this respect, if they appease the same doubt by producing the same rule of action, then no mere differences in the manner of consciousness of them can make them different beliefs, any more than playing a tune in different keys is playing different tunes. Imaginary distinctions are often drawn between beliefs which differ only in their mode of expression; — the wrangling which ensues is real enough, however. To believe that any objects are arranged among themselves as in

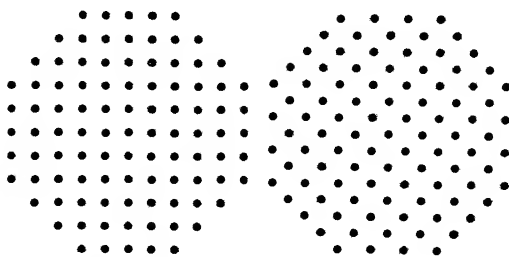


Figure 1.

Figure 2.

Figure 1, and to believe that they are arranged (as) in Figure 2, are one and the same belief; yet it is conceivable that a man should assert one proposition and deny the other. Such false distinctions do as much harm as the confusion of beliefs really different, and are among the pitfalls of which we ought constantly to beware, especially when we are upon metaphysical ground. One singular deception of this sort, which often occurs, is to mistake the sensation produced by our own unclearness of thought for a character of the object we are thinking. Instead of perceiving that the obscurity is purely subjective, we fancy that we contemplate a quality of the object which is essentially mysterious; and if our conception be afterward presented to us in a clear form we do not recognize it as the same, owing to the absence of the feeling of unintelligibility. So long as this deception lasts, it obviously puts an impassable barrier in the way of perspicuous thinking; so that it equally interests the opponents of rational thought to perpetuate it, and its adherents to guard against it.

399. Another such deception is to mistake a mere difference in the grammatical construc-

tion of two words for a distinction between the ideas they express. In this pedantic age, when the general mob of writers attend so much more to words than to things, this error is common enough. When I just said that thought is an *action*, and that it consists in a *relation*, although a person performs an action but not a relation, which can only be the result of an action, yet there was no inconsistency in what I said, but only a grammatical vagueness.

400. From all these sophisms we shall be perfectly safe so long as we reflect that the whole function of thought is to produce habits of action; and that whatever there is connected with a thought, but irrelevant to its purpose, is an accretion to it, but no part of it. If there be a unity among our sensations which has no reference to how we shall act on a given occasion, as when we listen to a piece of music, why, we do not call that thinking. To develop its meaning, we have, therefore, simply to determine what habits it produces, for what a thing means is simply what habits it involves. Now, the identity of a habit depends on how it might lead us to act not merely under such circumstances as are likely to arise, but under such as might possibly occur, no matter how improbable they may be. What the habit is depends on *when* and *how* it causes us to act. As for the *when*, every stimulus to action is derived from perception, as for the *how*, every purpose of action is to produce some sensible result. Thus, we come down to what is tangible and conceivably practical, as the root of every real distinction of thought, no matter how subtle it may be; and there is no distinction of meaning so fine as to consist in anything but a possible difference of practice.

401. To see what this principle leads to, consider in the light of it such a doctrine as that of transubstantiation. The Protestant churches generally hold that the elements of the sacrament are flesh and blood only in a tropical sense; they nourish our souls as meat and the juice of it would our bodies. But the Catholics maintain that they are literally just meat and blood; although they possess all the sensible qualities of wafer-cakes and

diluted wine. But we can have no conception of wine except what may enter into a belief, either —

1. That this, that, or the other is wine; or,

2. That wine possesses certain properties.

Such beliefs are nothing but self-notifications that we should upon occasion act in regard to such things as we believe to be wine, according to the qualities which we believe wine to possess. The occasion of such action would be some sensible perception, the motive of it to produce some sensible result. Thus our action has exclusive reference to what affects the senses, our habit has the same bearing as our action, our belief the same as our habit, our conception the same as our belief; and we can consequently mean nothing by wine but what has certain effects, direct or indirect, upon our senses; and to talk of something as having all the sensible characters of wine, yet being in reality blood, is senseless jargon. Now, it is not my object to pursue the theological question; and having used it as a logical example I drop it, without caring to anticipate the theologian's reply. I only desire to point out how impossible it is that we should have an idea in our minds which relates to anything but conceived sensible effects of things. Our idea of anything *is* our idea of its sensible effects; and if we fancy that we have any other we deceive ourselves, and mistake a mere sensation accompanying the thought for a part of the thought itself. It is absurd to say that thought has any meaning unrelated to its only function. It is foolish for Catholics and Protestants to fancy themselves in disagreement about the elements of the sacrament, if they agree in regard to all their sensible effects, here and hereafter.

402. It appears, then, that the rule for attaining the third grade of clearness of apprehension is as follows: Consider what effects, that might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object.

PRAGMATISM<sup>1</sup>

414. AFTER awaiting in vain, for a good many years, some particularly opportune conjuncture of circumstances that might serve to recommend his notions of the ethics of terminology, the writer has now, at last, dragged them in over head and shoulders, on an occasion when he has no specific proposal to offer nor any feeling but satisfaction at the course usage has run without any canons or resolutions of a congress. His word "pragmatism" has gained general recognition in a generalized sense that seems to argue power of growth and vitality. The famed psychologist, James, first took it up, seeing that his "radical empiricism" substantially answered to the writer's definition of pragmatism, albeit with a certain difference in the point of view. Next, the admirably clear and brilliant thinker, Mr. Ferdinand C. S. Schiller, casting about for a more attractive name for the "anthropomorphism" of his *Riddle of the Sphinx*, lit, in that most remarkable paper of his on *Axioms as Postulates*, upon the same designation "pragmatism," which in its original sense was in generic agreement with his own doctrine, for which he has since found the more appropriate specification "humanism," while he still retains "pragmatism" in a somewhat wider sense. So far all went happily. But at present, the word begins to be met with occasionally in the literary journals, where it gets abused in the merciless way that words have to expect when they fall into literary clutches. Sometimes the manners of the British have effloresced in scolding at the word as ill-chosen — ill-chosen, that is, to express some meaning that it was rather designed to exclude. So, then, the writer, finding his bantling "pragmatism" so promoted, feels that it is time to kiss his child good-by and relinquish it to its higher destiny; while to serve the precise purpose of expressing the original definition, he begs to announce the birth of the word "pragmaticism," which is ugly enough to be safe from kidnappers.

415. Much as the writer has gained from the perusal of what other pragmatists have written, he still thinks there is a decisive advantage in his original conception of the doctrine. From this original form every truth that follows from any of the other forms can be deduced, while some errors can be avoided into which other pragmatists have fallen. The original view appears, too, to be a more compact and unitary conception than the others. But its capital merit, in the writer's eyes, is that it more readily connects itself with a critical proof of its truth. Quite in accord with the logical order of investigation, it usually happens that one first forms an hypothesis that seems more and more reasonable the further one examines into it, but that only a good deal later gets crowned with an adequate proof. The present writer having had the pragmatist theory under consideration for many years longer than most of its adherents, would naturally have given more attention to the proof of it. At any rate, in endeavoring to explain pragmatism, he may be excused for confining himself to that form of it that he knows best. In the present article there will be space only to explain just what this doctrine (which, in such hands as it has now fallen into, may probably play a pretty prominent part in the philosophical discussions of the next coming years) really consists in. Should the exposition be found to interest readers of *The Monist*, they would certainly be much more interested in a second article which would give some samples of the manifold applications of pragmaticism (assuming it to be true) to the solution of problems of different kinds. After that, readers might be prepared to take an interest in a proof that the doctrine is true — a proof which seems to the writer to leave no reasonable doubt on the subject, and to be the one contribution of value he has to make to philosophy. For it would essentially involve the establishment of the truth of synechism.

<sup>1</sup> *Collected Papers*, vol. v, paragraphs 414-16.

416. The bare definition of pragmatism could convey no satisfactory comprehension of it to the most apprehensive of minds, but requires the commentary to be given below. Moreover, this definition takes no notice of one or two other doctrines without the previous acceptance (or virtual acceptance) of which pragmatism itself would be a nullity. They are included as a part of the pragmatism of Schiller, but the present writer prefers not to mingle different propositions. The preliminary propositions had better be stated forthwith.

The difficulty in doing this is that no formal list of them has ever been made. They might all be included under the vague maxim, "Dismiss make-believes." Philosophers of very diverse stripes propose that philosophy shall take its start from one or another state of mind in which no man, least of all a beginner in philosophy, actually is. One proposes that you shall begin by doubting everything, and says that there is only one thing that you cannot doubt, as if doubting were "as easy as lying." Another proposes that we should begin by observing "the first impressions of sense," forgetting that our very percepts are the results of cognitive elaboration. But in truth, there is but one state of mind from which you can "set out," namely, the very state of mind in which you actually find yourself at the time you do "set out" — a state in which you are laden with an immense mass of cognition already formed, of which you cannot divest yourself if you would; and who knows whether, if you could, you would not have made all knowledge impossible to yourself? Do you call it *doubting* to write down on a piece of paper that you doubt? If so, doubt has nothing to do with any serious business. But do not make believe; if pedantry has not eaten all the reality out of you, recognize, as you must, that there is much that you do not doubt, in the least.

Now that which you do not at all doubt, you must and do regard as infallible, absolute truth. Here breaks in Mr. Make Believe: "What! Do you mean to say that one is to believe what is not true, or that what a man does not doubt is *ipso facto* true?" No, but unless he can make a thing white and black at once, *he* has to regard what he does not doubt as absolutely true. Now you, *per hypothesiu*, are that man. "But you tell me there are scores of things I do not doubt. I really cannot persuade myself that there is not some one of them about which I am mistaken." You are adducing one of your make-believe facts, which, even if it were established, would only go to show that doubt has a *limen*, that is, is only called into being by a certain finite stimulus. You only puzzle yourself by talking of this metaphysical "truth" and metaphysical "falsity," that you know nothing about. All you have any dealings with are your doubts and beliefs, with the course of life that forces new beliefs upon you and gives you power to doubt old beliefs. If your terms "truth" and "falsity" are taken in such senses as to be definable in terms of doubt and belief and the course of experience (as for example they would be, if you were to define the "truth" as that to a belief in which belief would tend if it were to tend indefinitely toward absolute fixity), well and good: in that case, you are only talking about doubt and belief. But if by truth and falsity you mean something not definable in terms of doubt and belief in any way, then you are talking of entities of whose existence you can know nothing, and which Ockham's razor would clean shave off. Your problems would be greatly simplified, if, instead of saying that you want to know the "Truth," you were simply to say that you want to attain a state of belief unassailable by doubt.

# William James

(1842-1910)

WILLIAM JAMES was born in 1842. His father, Henry James, Sr., was a man of great originality who decisively influenced both William and his brother, Henry. William was educated largely in Europe. For a year he studied painting, then had three years in the Lawrence Scientific School working in chemistry, and three years in the Medical School. In 1865 he spent nine months on a scientific expedition to the Amazon with Agassiz. From 1872 until his death in 1910 he taught at Harvard, at first in the field of Physiology, then Psychology, and finally in Philosophy. After working on it for more than ten years he published *The Principles of Psychology* in 1890. *The Will to Believe* followed in 1897, and his Gifford lecture, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* in 1902. *Pragmatism*, *The Meaning of Truth*, and *A Pluralistic Universe* were published during the last three years of his life, and *Some Problems in Philosophy* and *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, after his death.

## THE PRINCIPLES OF PSYCHOLOGY<sup>1</sup>

### CHAPTER I

. . . . .  
CAN we state more distinctly still the manner in which the mental life seems to intervene between impressions made from without upon the body, and reactions of the body upon the outer world again? Let us look at a few facts.

If some iron filings be sprinkled on a table and a magnet brought near them, they will fly through the air for a certain distance and stick to its surface. A savage seeing the phenomenon explains it as the result of an attraction or love between the magnet and the filings.

But let a card cover the poles of the magnet, and the filings will press forever against its surface without its ever occurring to them to pass around its sides and thus come into more direct contact with the object of their love. Blow bubbles through a tube into the bottom of a pail of water, they will rise to the surface and mingle with the air. Their action may again be poetically interpreted as due to a longing to recombine with the mother-atmosphere above the surface. But if you invert a jar full of water over the pail, they will rise and remain lodged beneath its bottom, shut in from the outer air, although a slight deflection from their course at the outset, or a

<sup>1</sup> *Principles of Psychology*, pp. 6-11. New York, 1890. Reprinted with the permission of Henry Holt and Company.

re-descent towards the rim of the jar when they found their upward course impeded, would easily have set them free.

If now we pass from such actions as these to those of living things, we notice a striking difference. Romeo wants Juliet as the filings want the magnet; and if no obstacles intervene he moves toward her by as straight a line as they. But Romeo and Juliet, if a wall be built between them, do not remain idiotically pressing their faces against its opposite sides like the magnet and the filings with the card. Romeo soon finds a circuitous way, by scaling the wall or otherwise, of touching Juliet's lips directly. With the filings the path is fixed; whether it reaches the end depends on accidents. With the lover it is the end which is fixed, the path may be modified indefinitely.

Suppose a living frog in the position in which we placed our bubbles of air, namely, at the bottom of a jar of water. The want of breath will soon make him also long to rejoin the mother-atmosphere, and he will take the shortest path to his end by swimming straight upwards. But if a jar full of water be inverted over him, he will not, like the bubbles, perpetually press his nose against its unyielding roof, but will restlessly explore the neighborhood until by re-descending again he has discovered a path round its brim to the goal of his desires. Again the fixed end, the varying means!

Such contrasts between living and inanimate performances end by leading men to deny that in the physical world final purposes exist at all. Loves and desires are today no longer imputed to particles of iron or of air. No one supposes now that the end of any activity which they may display is an ideal purpose presiding over the activity from its outset and soliciting or drawing it into being by a sort of *vis a fronte*. The end, on the contrary, is deemed a mere passive result, pushed into being *a tergo*, had, so to speak, no voice in its own production. Alter the pre-existing conditions, and with inorganic materials you

bring forth each time a different apparent end. But with intelligent agents, altering the conditions changes the activity displayed, but not the end reached: for here the idea of the yet unrealized end co-operates with the conditions to determine what the activities shall be.

*The pursuance of future ends and the choice of means for their attainment are thus the mark and criterion of the presence of mentality in a phenomenon.* We all use this test to discriminate between an intelligent and a mechanical performance. We impute no mentality to sticks and stones, because they never seem to move *for the sake of* anything, but always when pushed, and then indifferently and with no sign of choice. So we unhesitatingly call them senseless.

Just so we form our decision upon the deepest of all philosophic problems: Is the Kosmos an expression of intelligence rational in its inward nature, or a brute external fact pure and simple? If we find ourselves, in contemplating it, unable to banish the impression that it is a realm of final purposes, that it exists for the sake of something, we place intelligence at the heart of it and have a religion. If, on the contrary, in surveying its irremediable flux, we can think of the present only as so much mere mechanical sprouting from the past, occurring with no reference to the future, we are atheists and materialists.

In the lengthy discussions which psychologists have carried on about the amount of intelligence displayed by lower mammals, or the amount of consciousness involved in the functions of the nerve-centres of reptiles, the same test has always been applied: Is the character of the actions such that we must believe them to be performed *for the sake of* their result?

... no actions but such as are done for an end, and show a choice of means, can be called indubitable expressions of Mind.

DOES "CONSCIOUSNESS" EXIST?<sup>1</sup>

"Thoughts" and "things" are names for two sorts of object, which common sense will always find contrasted and will always practically oppose to each other. Philosophy, reflecting on the contrast, has varied in the past in her explanations of it, and may be expected to vary in the future. At first, "spirit and matter," "soul and body," stood for a pair of equipollent substances quite on a par in weight and interest. But one day Kant undermined the soul and brought in the transcendental ego, and ever since then the bipolar relation has been very much off its balance. The transcendental ego seems nowadays in rationalist quarters to stand for everything, in empiricist quarters for almost nothing. In the hands of such writers as Schuppe, Rehmke, Natorp, Münsterberg — at any rate in his earlier writings — Schubert-Soldern, and others, the spiritual principle attenuates itself to a thoroughly ghostly condition, being only a name for the fact that the "content" of experience *is known*. It loses personal form and activity — these passing over to the content — and becomes a bare *Bewusstheit* or *Bewusstsein überhaupt*, of which in its own right absolutely nothing can be said.

I believe that "consciousness," when once it has evaporated to this estate of pure diaphaneity, is on the point of disappearing altogether. It is the name of a nonentity, and has no right to a place among first principles. Those who still cling to it are clinging to a mere echo, the faint rumor left behind by the disappearing "soul" upon the air of philosophy. During the past year, I have read a number of articles whose authors seemed just on the point of abandoning the notion of consciousness, and substituting for it that of an absolute experience not due to two factors. But they were not quite radical enough, not quite daring enough in their negations. For twenty years past I have mistrusted "con-

sciousness" as an entity; for seven or eight years past I have suggested its nonexistence to my students, and tried to give them its pragmatic equivalent in realities of experience. It seems to me that the hour is ripe for it to be openly and universally discarded.

To deny plumply that "consciousness" exists seems so absurd on the face of it — for undeniably "thoughts" exist — that I fear some readers will follow me no farther. Let me then immediately explain that I mean only to deny that the word stands for an entity, but to insist most emphatically that it does stand for a function. There is, I mean, no aboriginal stuff or quality of being, contrasted with that of which material objects are made; but there is a function in experience which thoughts perform, and for the performance of which this quality of being is invoked. That function is knowing. "Consciousness" is supposed necessary to explain the fact that things not only are, but get reported, are known. Whoever blots out the notion of consciousness from his list of first principles must still provide in some way for that function's being carried on.

## I

My thesis is that if we start with the supposition that there is only one primal stuff or material in the world, a stuff of which everything is composed, and if we call that stuff "pure experience," then knowing can easily be explained as a particular sort of relation toward one another into which portions of pure experience may enter. The relation itself is a part of pure experience: one of its "terms" becomes the subject or bearer of the knowledge, the knower, the other becomes the object known. This will need much explanation before it can be understood. The best way to get it understood is to contrast it with the alternative view; and for that we may take the recentest alternative, that in

<sup>1</sup> *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, pp. 1-10, 25. Reprinted with the permission of Longmans, Green and Company, New York.

which the evaporation of the definite soul-substance has proceeded as far as it can go without being yet complete. If neo-Kantism has expelled earlier forms of dualism, we shall have expelled all forms if we are able to expel neo-Kantism in its turn.

For the thinkers I call neo-Kantian, the word consciousness today does no more than signalize the fact that experience is indefeasibly dualistic in structure. It means that not subject, not object, but object-plus-subject is the minimum that can actually be. The subject-object distinction meanwhile is entirely different from that between mind and matter, from that between body and soul. Souls were detachable, had separate destinies: things could happen to them. To consciousness as such nothing can happen, for, timeless itself, it is only a witness of happenings in time, in which it plays no part. It is, in a word, but the logical correlative of "content" in an Experience of which the peculiarity is that *fact comes to light* in it, that *awareness of content* takes place. Consciousness as such is entirely impersonal — "self" and its activities belong to the content. To say that I am self-conscious, or conscious of putting forth volition, means only that certain contents, for which "self" and "effort of will" are the names, are not without witness as they occur.

Thus, for these belated drinkers at the Kantian spring, we should have to admit consciousness as an "epistemological" necessity, even if we had no direct evidence of its being there.

But in addition to this, we are supposed by almost everyone to have an immediate consciousness of consciousness itself. When the world of outer fact ceases to be materially present, and we merely recall it in memory, or fancy it, the consciousness is believed to stand out and to be felt as a kind of impalpable inner flowing, which, once known in this sort of experience, may equally be detected in presentations of the outer world. "The moment we try to fix our attention upon consciousness and to see *what*, distinctly, it is," says a recent writer, "it seems to vanish. It seems as if we had before us a mere emptiness. When we try to introspect the sensation of blue, all we can see is the blue; the other ele-

ment is as if it were diaphanous. Yet it *can* be distinguished, if we look attentively enough, and know that there is something to look for." "Consciousness" (*Bewusstheit*), says another philosopher, "is inexplicable and hardly describable, yet all conscious experiences have this in common, that what we call their content has this peculiar reference to a centre for which "self" is the name, in virtue of which reference alone the content is subjectively given, or appears. . . . While in this way consciousness, or reference to a self, is the only thing which distinguishes a conscious content from any sort of being that might be there with no one conscious of it, yet this only ground of the distinction defies all closer explanations. The existence of consciousness, although it is the fundamental fact of psychology, can indeed be laid down as certain, can be brought out by analysis, but can neither be defined nor deduced from anything but itself."

"Can be brought out by analysis," this author says. This supposes that the consciousness is one element, moment, factor — call it what you like — of an experience of essentially dualistic inner constitution, from which, if you abstract the content, the consciousness will remain revealed to its own eye. Experience, at this rate, would be much like a paint of which the world pictures were made. Paint has a dual constitution, involving, as it does, a menstruum (oil, size or what not) and a mass of content in the form of pigment suspended therein. We can get the pure menstruum by letting the pigment settle, and the pure pigment by pouring off the size or oil. We operate here by physical subtraction; and the usual view is, that by mental subtraction we can separate the two factors of experience in an analogous way — not isolating them entirely, but distinguishing them enough to know that they are two.

## II

Now my contention is exactly the reverse of this. *Experience, I believe, has no such inner duplicity: and the separation of it into consciousness and content comes, not by way of subtraction, but by way of addition* — the addition, to a given concrete piece of it, of other sets of



experiences, in connection with which severally its use or function may be of two different kinds. The paint will also serve here as an illustration. In a pot in a paint-shop, along with other paints, it serves in its entirety as so much salable matter. Spread on a canvas, with other paints around it, it represents, on the contrary, a feature in a picture and performs a spiritual function. Just so, I maintain, does a given undivided portion of experience, taken in one context of associates, play the part of a knower, of a state of mind, of "consciousness"; while in a different context the same undivided bit of experience plays the part of a thing known, of an objective "content." In a word, in one group it figures as a thought, in another group as a thing. And, since it can figure in both groups simultaneously, we have every right to speak of it as subjective and objective both at once. The dualism connoted by such double-bar-

relled terms as "experience," "phenomenon," "datum," "*Vorfindung*" — terms which, in philosophy at any rate, tend more and more to replace the single-barrelled terms of "thought" and "thing" — that dualism, I say, is still preserved in this account, but reinterpreted, so that, instead of being mysterious and elusive, it becomes verifiable and concrete. It is an affair of relations, it falls outside, not inside, the single experience considered, and can always be particularized and defined.

Consciousness connotes a kind of external relation, and does not denote a special stuff or way of being. *The peculiarity of our experiences, that they not only are, but are known, which their "conscious" quality is invoked to explain, is better explained by their relations — these relations themselves being experiences — to one another.*

## THE MEANING OF TRUTH<sup>1</sup>

### PREFACE

THE pivotal part of my book named *Pragmatism* is its account of the relation called "truth" which may obtain between an idea (opinion, belief, statement, or what not) and its object. "Truth," I there say, "is a property of certain of our ideas. It means their agreement, as falsity means their disagreement, with reality. Pragmatists and intellectualists both accept this definition as a matter of course.

"Where our ideas [do] not copy definitely their object, what does agreement with that object mean? . . . Pragmatism asks its usual question. 'Grant an idea or belief to be true,' it says, 'what concrete difference will its being true make in anyone's actual life? What experiences [may] be different from those which would obtain if the belief were false? How will the truth be realized? What, in short, is the truth's cash-value in experiential terms?' The moment pragmatism asks this question, it sees the answer: *True ideas are those that we can assimilate, validate, corroborate,*

*and verify. False ideas are those that we cannot.* That is the practical difference it makes to us to have true ideas; that therefore is the meaning of truth, for it is all that truth is known as.

"The truth of an idea is not a stagnant property inherent in it. Truth *happens* to an idea. It *becomes* true, is *made* true by events. Its verity is in fact an event, a process, the process namely of its verifying itself, its *verification*. Its validity is the process of its *validation*.

"To agree in the widest sense with a reality can only mean to be guided either straight up to it or into its surroundings, or to be put into such working touch with it as to handle either it or something connected with it better than if we disagreed. Better either intellectually or practically. . . . Any idea that helps us to deal, whether practically or intellectually, with either the reality or its belongings, that doesn't entangle our progress in frustrations, that *fits*, in fact, and adapts our life to the reality's whole setting, will

<sup>1</sup> *The Meaning of Truth*. New York, 1909. Reprinted with the permission of Longmans, Green and Company.

agree sufficiently to meet the requirement. It will be true of that reality.

"*The true, to put it very briefly, is only the expedient in the way of our thinking, just as the right is only the expedient in the way of our behaving.* Expedient in almost any fashion, and expedient in the long run and on the whole, of course; for what meets expediently all the experience in sight won't necessarily meet all farther experiences equally satisfactorily. Experience, as we know, has ways of *boiling over*, and making us correct our present formulas."

This account of truth, following upon the similar ones given by Messrs. Dewey and Schiller, has occasioned the liveliest discussion. Few critics have defended it, most of them have scouted it. It seems evident that the subject is a hard one to understand, under its apparent simplicity; and evident also, I think, that the definitive settlement of it will mark a turning-point in the history of epistemology, and consequently in that of general philosophy. In order to make my own thought more accessible to those who hereafter may have to study the question, I have collected in the volume that follows all the work of my pen that bears directly on the truth-question. My first statement was in 1884, in the article that begins the present volume. The other papers follow in the order of their publication. Two or three appear now for the first time.

One of the accusations which I oftenest have had to meet is that of making the truth of our religious beliefs consist in their "feeling good" to us, and in nothing else. I regret to have given some excuse for this charge, by the unguarded language in which, in the book *Pragmatism*, I spoke of the truth of the belief of certain philosophers in the absolute. Explaining why I do not believe in the absolute myself, yet finding that it may secure "moral holidays" to those who need them, and is true in so far forth (if to gain moral holidays be a good), I offered this as a conciliatory olive-branch to my enemies. But they, as is only too common with such offerings, trampled the gift underfoot and turned and rent the giver. I had counted too much on their good will — oh for the rarity of

Christian charity under the sun! Oh for the rarity of ordinary secular intelligence also! I had supposed it to be matter of common observation that, of two competing views of the universe which in all other respects are equal, but of which the first denies some vital human need while the second satisfies it, the second will be favored by sane men for the simple reason that it makes the world seem more rational. To choose the first view under such circumstances would be an ascetic act, an act of philosophic self-denial of which no normal human being would be guilty. Using the pragmatic test of the meaning of concepts, I had shown the concept of the absolute to *mean* nothing but the holiday giver, the banisher of cosmic fear. One's objective deliverance, when one says "the absolute exists," amounted, on my showing, just to this, that "some justification of a feeling of security in presence of the universe," exists, and that systematically to refuse to cultivate a feeling of security would be to do violence to a tendency in one's emotional life which might well be respected as prophetic.

Apparently my absolutist critics fail to see the workings of their own minds in any such picture, so all that I can do is to apologize, and take my offering back. The absolute is true in *no* way then, and least of all, by the verdict of the critics, in the way which I assigned!

My treatment of "God," "freedom," and "design" was similar. Reducing, by the pragmatic test, the meaning of each of these concepts to its positive experienceable operation, I showed them all to mean the same thing, viz., the presence of "promise" in the world. "God or no God?" means "promise or no promise?" It seems to me that the alternative is objective enough, being a question as to whether the cosmos has one character or another, even though our own provisional answer be made on subjective grounds. Nevertheless Christian and non-Christian critics alike accuse me of summoning people to say "God exists," *even when he doesn't exist*, because forsooth in my philosophy the "truth" of the saying doesn't really mean that he exists in any shape whatever, but only that to say so feels good.

Most of the pragmatist and anti-pragmatist warfare is over what the word "truth" shall be held to signify, and not over any of the facts embodied in truth-situations, for both pragmatists and anti-pragmatists believe in existent objects, just as they believe in our ideas of them. The difference is that when the pragmatists speak of truth, they mean exclusively something about the ideas, namely their workableness; whereas when anti-pragmatists speak of truth they seem most often to mean something about the objects. Since the pragmatist, if he agrees that an idea is "really" true, also agrees to whatever it says about its object; and since most anti-pragmatists have already come round to agreeing that, if the object exists, the idea that it does so is workable; there would seem so little left to fight about that I might well be asked why instead of reprinting my share in so much verbal wrangling, I do not show my sense of "values" by burning it all up.

I understand the question and I will give my answer. I am interested in another doctrine in philosophy to which I give the name of radical empiricism, and it seems to me that the establishment of the pragmatist theory of truth is a step of first-rate importance in making radical empiricism prevail. Radical empiricism consists first of a postulate, next of a statement of fact, and finally of a generalized conclusion.

The postulate is that the only things that shall be debatable among philosophers shall be things definable in terms drawn from experience. (Things of an unexperienceable nature may exist *ad libitum*, but they form no part of the material for philosophic debate.)

The statement of fact is that the relations between things, conjunctive as well as disjunctive, are just as much matters of direct particular experience, neither more so nor less so, than the things themselves.

The generalized conclusion is that therefore the parts of experience hold together from next to next by relations that are themselves parts of experience. The directly apprehended universe needs, in short, no extraneous trans-empirical connective support, but possesses in its own right a concatenated or continuous structure.

The great obstacle to radical empiricism in the contemporary mind is the rooted rationalist belief that experience as immediately given is all disjunction and no conjunction, and that to make one world out of this separateness, a higher unifying agency must be there. In the prevalent idealism this agency is represented as the absolute all-witness which "relates" things together by throwing "categories" over them like a net. The most peculiar and unique, perhaps, of all these categories is supposed to be the truth-relation, which connects parts of reality in pairs, making of one of them a knower, and of the other a thing known, yet which is itself contentless experientially, neither describable, explicable, nor reducible to lower terms, and denotable only by uttering the name "truth."

The pragmatist view, on the contrary, of the truth-relation is that it has a definite content, and that everything in it is experienceable. Its whole nature can be told in positive terms. The "workableness" which ideas must have, in order to be true, means particular workings, physical or intellectual, actual or possible, which they may set up from next to next inside of concrete experience. Were this pragmatic contention admitted, one great point in the victory of radical empiricism would also be scored; for the relation between an object and the idea that truly knows it is held by rationalists to be nothing of this describable sort, but to stand outside of all possible temporal experience; and on the relation, so interpreted, rationalism is wonted to make its last most obdurate rally.

Now the anti-pragmatist contentions which I try to meet in this volume can be so easily used by rationalists as weapons of resistance, not only to pragmatism but to radical empiricism also (for if the truth-relation were transcendent, others might be so too), that I feel strongly the strategical importance of having them definitely met and got out of the way. What our critics most persistently keep saying is that though workings go with truth, yet they do not constitute it. It is numerically additional to them, prior to them, explanatory of them, and in no wise

to be explained *by* them, we are incessantly told. The first point for our enemies to establish, therefore, is that *something* numerically additional and prior to the workings is involved in the truth of an idea. Since the *object* is additional, and usually prior, most rationalists plead *it*, and boldly accuse us of denying it. This leaves on the bystanders the impression — since we cannot reasonably deny the existence of the object — that our account of truth breaks down, and that our critics have driven us from the field. Although in various places in this volume I try to refute the slanderous charge that we deny real existence, I will say here again, for the sake of emphasis, that the existence of the object, whenever the idea asserts it “truly,” is the only reason, in innumerable cases, why the idea does work successfully, if it work at all; and that it seems an abuse of language, to say the least, to transfer the word “truth” from the idea to the object’s existence, when the falsehood of ideas that won’t work is explained by that existence as well as the truth of those that will.

I find this abuse prevailing among my most accomplished adversaries. But once establish the proper verbal custom, let the word “truth” represent a property of the idea, cease to make it something mysteriously connected with the object known, and the path opens fair and wide, as I believe, to the discussion of radical empiricism on its merits. The truth of an idea will then mean only its workings, or that in it which by ordinary psychological laws sets up those workings; it will mean neither the idea’s object, nor anything “saltatory” inside the idea, that terms drawn from experience cannot describe.

One word more, ere I end this preface. A distinction is sometimes made between Dewey, Schiller, and myself, as if I, in supposing the object’s existence, made a concession to popular prejudice which they, as more radical pragmatists, refuse to make. As I myself understand these authors, we all three absolutely agree in admitting the transcendency of the object (provided it be an ex-

perienceable object) to the subject, in the truth-relation. Dewey in particular has insisted almost ad nauseam that the whole meaning of our cognitive states and processes lies in the way they intervene in the control and revaluation of independent existences or facts. His account of knowledge is not only absurd, but meaningless, unless independent existences be there of which our ideas take account, and for the transformation of which they work. But because he and Schiller refuse to discuss objects and relations “transcendent” in the sense of being *altogether trans-experiential*, their critics pounce on sentences in their writings to that effect to show that they deny the existence *within the realm of experience* of objects external to the ideas that declare their presence there. It seems incredible that educated and apparently sincere critics should so fail to catch their adversary’s point of view.

What misleads so many of them is possibly also the fact that the universes of discourse of Schiller, Dewey, and myself are panoramas of different extent, and that what the one postulates explicitly the other provisionally leaves only in a state of implication, while the reader thereupon considers it to be denied. Schiller’s universe is the smallest, being essentially a psychological one. He starts with but one sort of thing, truth-claims, but is led ultimately to the independent objective facts which they assert, inasmuch as the most successfully validated of all claims is that such facts are there. My universe is more essentially epistemological. I start with two things, the objective facts and the claims, and indicate which claims, the facts being there, will work successfully as the latter’s substitutes and which will not. I call the former claims true. Dewey’s panorama, if I understand this colleague, is the widest of the three, but I refrain from giving my own account of its complexity. Suffice it that he holds as firmly as I do to objects independent of our judgments. If I am wrong in saying this, he must correct me. I decline in this matter to be corrected at second hand.

THE PROBLEMS OF METAPHYSICS<sup>1</sup>

NO EXACT definition of the term "metaphysics" is possible, and to name some of the problems it treats of is the best way of getting at the meaning of the word. It means the discussion of various obscure, abstract, and universal questions which the sciences and life in general suggest but do not solve; questions left over, as it were; questions, all of them very broad and deep, and relating to the whole of things, or to the ultimate elements thereof. Instead of a definition let me cite a few examples, in a random order, of such questions:

What are "thoughts," and what are "things"? and how are they connected?

What do we mean when we say "truth"?

Is there a common stuff out of which all facts are made?

How comes there to be a world at all? and, Might it as well not have been?

Which is the most real kind of reality?

What binds all things into one universe?

Is unity or diversity more fundamental?

Have all things one origin? or many?

Is everything predestined, or are some things (our wills, for example) free?

Is the world infinite or finite in amount?

Are its parts continuous, or are there vacua?

What is God? — or the gods?

How are mind and body joined? Do they act on each other?

How does anything act on anything else?

How can one thing change or grow out of another thing?

Are space and time beings? — or what?

In knowledge, how does the object get into the mind? — or the mind get at the object?

We know by means of universal notions. Are these also real? Or are only particular things real?

What is meant by a "thing"?

"Principles of reason," — are they inborn or derived?

Are "beauty" and "good" matters of opinion only? Or have they objective validity? And, if so, what does the phrase mean?

Such are specimens of the kind of question termed metaphysical. Kant said that the three essential metaphysical questions were:

What can I know?

What should I do?

What may I hope?

A glance at all such questions suffices to rule out such a definition of metaphysics as that of Christian Wolff, who called it "the science of what is possible," as distinguished from that of what is actual, for most of the questions relate to what is actual fact. One may say that metaphysics inquires into the cause, the substance, the meaning, and the outcome of all things. Or one may call it the science of the most universal principles of reality (whether experienced by us or not), in their connection with one another and with our powers of knowledge. "Principles" here may mean either entities, like "atoms," "souls," or logical laws like "A thing must either exist or not exist"; or generalized facts, like "Things can act only after they exist." But the principles are so numerous, and the "science" of them is so far from completion, that such definitions have only a decorative value. The serious work of metaphysics is done over the separate single questions. If these should get cleared up, talk of metaphysics as a unified science might properly begin. This book proposes to handle only a few separate problems, leaving others untouched.

These problems are for the most part real; that is, but few of them result from a misuse of terms in stating them. "Things," for example, are or are not composed of one stuff; they either have or have not a single origin; they either are or are not completely pre-determined, etc. Such alternatives may indeed be impossible of decision; but until this is

<sup>1</sup> *Some Problems in Philosophy*, pp. 29-37. New York, 1911. Reprinted with the permission of Longmans, Green and Company.

conclusively proved of them, they confront us legitimately, and someone must take charge of them and keep account of the solutions that are proposed, even if he does not himself add new ones. The opinions of the learned regarding them must, in short, be classified and responsibly discussed. For instance, how many opinions are possible as to the origin of the world? Spencer says that the world must have been either eternal, or self-created, or created by an outside power. So for him there are only three. Is this correct? If so, which of the three views seems the most reasonable? and why? In a moment we are in the thick of metaphysics. We have to be metaphysicians even to decide with Spencer that neither mode of origin is thinkable and that the whole problem is unreal.

Some hypotheses may be absurd on their face, because they are self-contradictory. If, for example, infinity means "what can never be completed by successive syntheses," the notion of anything made by the successive addition of infinitely numerous parts, and yet completed, is absurd. Other hypotheses, for example that everything in nature contributes to a single supreme purpose, may be insusceptible either of proof or of disproof. Other hypotheses again, for instance that vacua exist, may be susceptible of probable solution. The classing of the hypotheses is thus as necessary as the classing of the problems, and both must be recognized as constituting a serious branch of learning. There must in short be metaphysicians. Let us for a while become metaphysicians ourselves.

As we survey the history of metaphysics we soon realize that two pretty distinct types of mind have filled it with their warfare. Let us call them the rationalist and the empiricist types of mind. A saying of Coleridge's is often quoted, to the effect that everyone is born either a Platonist or an Aristotelian. By Aristotelian, he means empiricist, and by Platonist, he means rationalist; but although the contrast between the two Greek philosophers exists in the sense in which Coleridge meant it, both of them were rationalists as compared with the kind of empiricism which Democritus and Protagoras developed; and Coleridge had better have taken

either of those names instead of Aristotle as his empiricist example.

Rationalists are the men of principles, empiricists the men of facts; but, since principles are universals, and facts are particulars, perhaps the best way of characterizing the two tendencies is to say that rationalist thinking proceeds most willingly by going from wholes to parts, while empiricist thinking proceeds by going from parts to wholes. Plato, the arch-rationalist, explained the details of nature by their participation in "ideas," which all depended on the supreme idea of the "good." Protagoras and Democritus were empiricists. The latter explained the whole cosmos, including gods as well as men, and thoughts as well as things, by their composition out of atomic elements; Protagoras explained truth, which for Plato was the absolute system of the ideas, as a collective name for men's opinions.

Rationalists prefer to deduce facts from principles. Empiricists prefer to explain principles as inductions from facts. Is thought for the sake of life? or is life for the sake of thought? Empiricism inclines to the former, rationalism to the latter branch of the alternative. God's life, according to Aristotle and Hegel, is pure theory. The mood of admiration is natural to rationalism. Its theories are usually optimistic, supplementing the experienced world by clean and pure ideal constructions. Aristotle and Plato, the Scholastics, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibnitz, Kant, and Hegel are examples of this. They claimed absolute finality for their systems, in the noble architecture of which, as their authors believed, truth was eternally embalmed. This temper of finality is foreign to empiricist minds. They may be dogmatic about their method of building on "hard facts," but they are willing to be sceptical about any conclusions reached by the method at a given time. They aim at accuracy of detail rather than at completeness; are contented to be fragmentary; are less inspiring than the rationalists, often treating the high as a case of "nothing but" the low ("nothing but" self-interest well understood, etc.), but they usually keep more in touch with actual life, are less subjective, and their spirit is

obviously more "scientific" in the hackneyed sense of that term. Socrates, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, the Mills, F. A. Lange, J. Dewey, F. C. S. Schiller, Bergson, and other contemporaries are specimens of this type. Of course we find mixed minds in abundance, and few philosophers are typical in either class.

Kant may fairly be called mixed. Lotze and Royce are mixed. The author of this volume is weakly endowed on the rationalist side, and his book will show a strong leaning toward empiricism. The clash of the two ways of looking at things will be emphasized throughout the volume.

## PERCEPT AND CONCEPT—THE IMPORT OF CONCEPTS<sup>1</sup>

THE problem convenient to take up next in order will be that of the difference between thoughts and things. "Things" are known to us by our senses, and are called "presentations" by some authors, to distinguish them from the ideas or "representations" which we may have when our senses are closed. I myself have grown accustomed to the words "percept" and "concept" in treating of the contrast, but concepts flow out of percepts and into them again, they are so interlaced, and our life rests on them so interchangeably and indiscriminatingly, that it is often difficult to impart quickly to beginners a clear notion of the difference meant. Sensation and thought in man are mingled, but they vary independently. In our quadrupedal relatives thought proper is at a minimum, but we have no reason to suppose that their immediate life of feeling is either less or more copious than ours. Feeling must have been originally self-sufficing; and thought appears as a superadded function, adapting us to a wider environment than that of which brutes take account. Some parts of the stream of feeling must be more intense, emphatic, and exciting than others in animals as well as in ourselves; but whereas lower animals simply react upon these more salient sensations by appropriate movements, higher animals remember them, and men react on them intellectually, by using nouns, adjectives, and verbs to identify them when they meet them elsewhere.

The great difference between percepts and concepts is that percepts are continuous and concepts are discrete. Not discrete in their *being*, for conception as an *act* is part of the flux of feeling, but discrete from each other in their several *meanings*. Each concept means just what it singly means, and nothing else; and if the conceiver does not know whether he means this or means that, it shows that his concept is imperfectly formed. The perceptual flux as such, on the contrary, *means* nothing, and is but what it immediately is. No matter how small a tract of it be taken, it is always a much-at-once, and contains innumerable aspects and characters which conception can pick out, isolate, and thereafter always intend. It shows duration, intensity, complexity or simplicity, interestingness, excitingness, pleasantness, or their opposites. Data from all our senses enter into it, merged in a general extensiveness of which each occupies a big or little share. Yet all these parts leave its unity unbroken. Its boundaries are no more distinct than are those of the field of vision. Boundaries are things that intervene; but here nothing intervenes save parts of the perceptual flux itself, and these are overflowed by what they separate, so that whatever we distinguish and isolate conceptually is found perceptually to telescope and compenetrate and diffuse into its neighbors. The cuts we make are purely ideal. If my reader can succeed in abstracting from all conceptual interpretation and lapse

<sup>1</sup> *Some Problems of Philosophy*, chap. 4. New York, 1911.

Reprinted with the permission of Longmans, Green and Company.

back into his immediate sensible life at this very moment, he will find it to be what someone has called a big blooming buzzing confusion, as free from contradiction in its "much-at-onceness" as it is all alive and evidently there.

Out of this aboriginal sensible muchness attention carves out objects, which conception then names and identifies forever — in the sky "constellations," on the earth "beach," "sea," "cliff," "bushes," "grass." Out of time we cut "days," and "nights," "summers" and "winters." We say *what* each part of the sensible continuum is, and all these abstracted *whats* are concepts.

*The intellectual life of man consists almost wholly in his substitution of a conceptual order for the perceptual order in which his experience originally comes.* But before tracing the consequences of the substitution, I must say something about the conceptual order itself.

Trains of concepts unmixed with percepts grow frequent in the adult mind; and parts of these conceptual trains arrest our attention just as parts of the perceptual flow did, giving rise to concepts of a higher order of abstractness. So subtle is the discernment of man, and so great the power of some men to single out the most fugitive elements of what passes before them, that these new formations have no limit. Aspect within aspect, quality after quality, relation upon relation, absences and negations as well as present features, end by being noted and their names added to the store of nouns, verbs, adjectives, conjunctions, and prepositions by which the human mind interprets life. Every new book verbalizes some new concept, which becomes important in proportion to the use that can be made of it. Different universes of thought thus arise, with specific sorts of relation among their ingredients. The world of common-sense "things"; the world of material tasks to be done; the mathematical world of pure forms; the world of ethical propositions; the worlds of logic, of music, etc., all abstracted and generalized from long forgotten perceptual instances, from which they have as it were flowered out, return and merge themselves again in the particulars of our present and future perception. By those

*whats* we apperceive all our *thises*. Percepts and concepts interpenetrate and melt together, impregnate and fertilize each other. Neither, taken alone, knows reality in its completeness. We need them both, as we need both our legs to walk with.

From Aristotle downwards philosophers have frankly admitted the indispensability, for complete knowledge of fact, of both the sensational and the intellectual contribution. For complete knowledge of fact, I say; but facts are particulars and connect themselves with practical necessities and the arts; and Greek philosophers soon formed the notion that a knowledge of so-called "universals," consisting of concepts of abstract forms, qualities, numbers, and relations was the only knowledge worthy of the truly philosophic mind. Particular facts decay and our perceptions of them vary. A concept never varies; and between such unvarying terms the relations must be constant and express eternal verities. Hence there arose a tendency, which has lasted all through philosophy, to contrast the knowledge of universals and intelligibles, as god-like, dignified, and honorable to the knower, with that of particulars and sensibles as something relatively base which more allies us with the beasts.

For rationalistic writers conceptual knowledge was not only the more noble knowledge, but it originated independently of all perceptual particulars. Such concepts as God, perfection, eternity, infinity, immutability, identity, absolute beauty, truth, justice, necessity, freedom, duty, worth, etc., and the part they play in our mind, are, it was supposed, impossible to explain as results of practical experience. The empiricist view, and probably the true view, is that they do result from practical experience. But a more important question than that as to the origin of our concepts is that as to their functional use and value; — is *that* tied down to perceptual experience, or out of all relation to it? Is conceptual knowledge self-sufficing and a revelation all by itself, quite apart from its uses in helping to a better understanding of the world of sense?

Rationalists say, Yes. For, as we shall see in later places, the various conceptual uni-



verses referred to can be considered in complete abstraction from perceptual reality, and when they are so considered, all sorts of fixed relations can be discovered among their parts. From these the *a priori* sciences of logic, mathematics, ethics, and aesthetics (so far as the last two can be called sciences at all) result. Conceptual knowledge must thus be called a self-sufficing revelation; and by rationalistic writers it has always been treated as admitting us to a diviner world, the world of universal rather than that of perishing facts, of essential qualities, immutable relations, eternal principles of truth and right. Emerson writes: "Generalization is always a new influx of divinity into the mind: hence the thrill that attends it." And a disciple of Hegel, after exalting the knowledge of "the General, Unchangeable, and alone Valuable" above that of "the Particular, Sensible and Transient," adds that if you reproach philosophy with being unable to make a single grass-blade grow, or even to know how it does grow, the reply is that since such a particular "how" stands not above but below knowledge, strictly so-called, such an ignorance argues no defect.

To this ultra-rationalistic opinion the empiricist contention that *the significance of concepts consists always in their relation to perceptual particulars* has been opposed. Made of percepts, or distilled from parts of percepts, their essential office, it has been said, is to coalesce with percepts again, bringing the mind back into the perceptual world with a better command of the situation there. Certainly whenever we *can* do this with our concepts, we do *more* with them than when we leave them flocking with their abstract and motionless companions. It is possible, therefore, to join the rationalists in allowing conceptual knowledge to be self-sufficing, while at the same time one joins the empiricists in maintaining that the full *value* of such knowledge is got only by combining it with perceptual reality again. This mediating attitude is that which this book must adopt. But to understand the nature of concepts better we must now go on to distinguish their *function* from their *content*.

The concept "man," to take an example,

is three things: 1, the word itself; 2, a vague picture of the human form which has its own value in the way of beauty or not; and 3, an instrument for symbolizing certain objects from which we may expect human treatment when occasion arrives. Similarly of "triangle," "cosine," — they have their substantive value both as words and as images suggested, but they also have a functional value whenever they lead us elsewhere in discourse.

There are concepts, however, the image-part of which is so faint that their whole value seems to be functional. "God," "cause," "number," "substance," "soul," for example, suggest no definite picture; and their significance seems to consist entirely in their *tendency*, in the further turn which they may give to our action or our thought. We cannot rest in the contemplation of their form, as we can in that of a "circle" or a "man"; we must pass beyond.

Now, however beautiful or otherwise worthy of stationary contemplation the substantive part of a concept may be, the more important part of its significance may naturally be held to be the consequences to which it leads. These may lie either in the way of making us think, or in the way of making us act. Whoever has a clear idea of these knows effectively what the concept practically signifies, whether its substantive content be interesting in its own right or not.

This consideration has led to a method of interpreting concepts to which I shall give the name of *the Pragmatic Rule*.

The pragmatic rule is that the meaning of a concept may always be found, if not in some sensible particular which it directly designates, then in some particular difference in the course of human experience which its being true will make. Test every concept by the question, "What sensible difference to anybody will its truth make?" and you are in the best possible position for understanding what it means and for discussing its importance. If, questioning whether a certain concept be true or false, you can think of absolutely nothing that would practically differ in the two cases, you may assume that the alternative is meaningless and that your

concept is no distinct idea. If two concepts lead you to infer the same particular consequence, then you may assume that they embody the same meaning under different names.

This rule applies to concepts of every order of complexity, from simple terms to propositions uniting many terms.

So many disputes in philosophy hinge upon ill-defined words and ideas, each side claiming its own word or idea to be true, that any accepted method of making meanings clear must be of great utility. No method can be handier of application than our pragmatic rule. If you claim that any idea is true, assign at the same time some difference that its being true will make in some possible person's history, and we shall know not only just what you are really claiming but also how important an issue it is, and how to go to work to verify the claim. In obeying this rule we neglect the substantive content of the concept, and follow its function only. This neglect might seem at first sight to need excuse, for the content often has a value of its own which might conceivably add luster to reality, if it existed, apart from any modification wrought by it in the other parts of reality. Thus it is often supposed that "Idealism" is a theory precious in itself, even though no definite change in the details of our experience can be deduced from it. Later discussion will show that this is a superficial view, and that particular consequences are the only criterion of a concept's meaning, and the only test of its truth.

Instances are hardly called for, they are so obvious. That A and B are "equal," for example, means either that "you will find no difference," when you pass from one to the other, or that in substituting one for the other in certain operations "you will get the same result both times." "Substance" means that "a definite group of sensations will recur." "Incommensurable" means that "you are always confronted with a remainder." "Infinite" means either that, or that "you can count as many units in a part as you can in the whole." "More" and "less" mean certain sensations, varying according to the matter. "Freedom" means "no feeling of

sensible restraint." "Necessity" means that "your way is blocked in all directions save one." "God" means that "you can dismiss certain kinds of fear," "cause" that "you may expect certain sequences," etc., etc. We shall find plenty of examples in the rest of this book; so I go back now to the more general question of whether the whole import of the world of concepts lies in its relation to perceptual experience, or whether it be also an independent revelation of reality. Great ambiguity is possible in answering this question, so we must mind our *ps* and *qs*.

The first thing to notice is that in the earliest stages of human intelligence, so far as we can guess at them, thought proper must have had an exclusively practical use. Men classed their sensations, substituting concepts for them, in order to "work them for what they were worth," and to prepare for what might lie ahead. Class-names suggest consequences that have attached themselves on other occasions to other members of the class — consequences which the present percept will also probably or certainly show. The present percept in its immediacy may thus often sink to the status of a bare sign of the consequences which the substituted concept suggests.

The substitution of concepts and their connections, of a whole conceptual order, in short, for the immediate perceptual flow, thus widens enormously our mental panorama. Had we no concepts we should live simply "getting" each successive moment of experience, as the sessile sea-anemone on its rock receives whatever nourishment the wash of the waves may bring. With concepts we go in quest of the absent, meet the remote, actively turn this way or that, bend our experience, and make it tell us whither it is bound. We change its order, run it backwards, bring far bits together and separate near bits, jump about over its surface instead of plowing through its continuity, string its items on as many ideal diagrams as our mind can frame. All these are ways of *handling* the perceptual flux and *meeting* distant parts of it; and as far as this primary function of conception goes, we can only

conclude it to be what I began by calling it, a faculty superadded to our barely perceptual consciousness for its use in practically adapting us to a larger environment than that of which brutes take account. We *harness* perceptual reality in concepts in order to drive it better to our ends.

Does our conceptual translation of the perceptual flux enable us also to understand the latter better? What do we mean by making us "understand"? Applying our pragmatic rule to the interpretation of the word, we see that the better we understand anything the more we are able to *tell about it*. Judged by this test, concepts do make us understand our percepts better: knowing *what* these are, we can tell all sorts of farther truths about them, based on the relation of those *whats* to other *whats*. The whole system of relations, spatial, temporal, and logical, of our fact, gets plotted out. An ancient philosophical opinion, inherited from Aristotle, is that we do not understand a thing until we know it by its causes. When the maid-servant says that "the cat" broke the teacup, she would have us conceive the fracture in a causally explanatory way. No otherwise when Clerk-Maxwell asks us to conceive of gas-electricity as due to molecular bombardment. An imaginary agent out of sight becomes in each case a part of the cosmic context in which we now place the percept to be explained; and the explanation is valid in so far as the new causal *that* is itself conceived in a context that makes its existence probable, and with a nature agreeable to the effects it is imagined to produce. All our scientific explanations would seem to conform to this simple type of the "necessary cat." The conceived order of nature built round the perceived order and explaining it theoretically, as we say, is only a system of hypothetically imagined *thats*, the *whats* of which harmoniously connect themselves with the *what* of any *that* which we immediately perceive.

The system is essentially a topographic system, a system of the distribution of things. It tells us what's what, and where's where. In so far forth it merely prolongs that opening up of the perspective of practical conse-

quences which we found to be the primordial utility of the conceiving faculty: it adapts us to an immense environment. Working by the causes of things, we gain advantages which we never should have compassed had we worked by the things alone.

But in order to reach such results the concepts in the explanatory system must, I said "harmoniously connect." What does that mean? Is this also only a practical advantage, or is it something more? It seems something more, for it points to the fact that when concepts of various sorts are once abstracted or constructed, new relations are then found between them, connecting them in peculiarly intimate, "rational," and unchangeable ways. In another book I have tried to show that these rational relations are all products of our faculty of comparison and of our sense of "more."

The sciences which exhibit these relations are the so-called *a priori* sciences of mathematics and logic. But these sciences express relations of comparison and identification exclusively. Geometry and algebra, for example, first define certain conceptual objects, and then establish equations between them, substituting equals for equals. Logic has been defined as the "substitution of similars"; and in general one may say that the perception of likeness and unlikeness generates the whole of "rational" or "necessary" truth. Nothing *happens* in the worlds of logic, mathematics or moral and aesthetic preference. The static nature of the relations in these worlds is what gives to the propositions that express them their "eternal" character: The binomial theorem, for example, expresses the value of any power of any sum of two terms, to the end of time.

These vast unmoving systems of universal terms form the new worlds of thought of which I spoke. The terms are elements (or are framed of elements) abstracted from the perceptual flux; but in their abstract shape we note relations between them (and again between these relations) which enable us to set up various schemes of fixed serial orders or of "more and more." The terms are indeed man-made, but the order, being established solely by comparison, is fixed by

the nature of the terms on the one hand and by our power of perceiving relations on the other. Thus two abstract twos are always the same as an abstract four; what contains the container contains the contained of whatever material either be made; equals added to equals always give equal results, in the world in which abstract equality is the only property the terms are supposed to possess; the more than the more is more than the less, no matter in what direction of moreness we advance; if you dot off a term in one series every time you dot one off in another, the two series will either never end, or will come to an end together, or one will be exhausted first, etc., etc., the result being those skeletons of "rational" or "necessary" truth in which our logic and mathematics books (sometimes our philosophy books) arrange their universal terms.

The "rationalization" of any mass of perceptual fact consists in assimilating its concrete terms, one by one, to so many terms of the conceptual series, and then in assuming that the relations intuitively found among the latter are what connect the former too. Thus we rationalize gas-pressure by identifying it with the blows of hypothetical molecules; then we see that the more closely the molecules are crowded the more frequent the blows upon the containing walls will become; then we discern the exact proportionality of the crowding with the number of blows; so that finally Mariotte's empirical law gets rationally explained. All our transformations of the sense-order into a more rational equivalent are similar to this one. We interrogate the beautiful apparition, as Emerson calls it, which our senses ceaselessly raise upon our path, and the items there refer us to their interpretants in the shape of ideal constructions in some static arrangement which our mind has already made out of its concepts alone. The interpretants are then substituted for the sensations, which thus get rationally conceived. To "explain" means to co-ordinate, one to one, the *theses* of the perceptual flow with the *whats* of the ideal manifold, whichever it be.

We may well call this a theoretic conquest over the order in which nature originally

comes. The conceptual order into which we translate our experience seems not only a means of practical adaptation, but the revelation of a deeper level of reality in things. Being more constant, it is *truer*, less illusory than the perceptual order, and ought to command our attention more.

There is still another reason why conception appears such an exalted function. Concepts not only guide us over the map of life, but we *revalue* life by their use. Their relation to percepts is like that of sight to touch. Sight indeed helps us by preparing us for contacts while they are yet far off, but it endows us in addition with a new world of optical splendor, interesting enough all by itself to occupy a busy life. Just so do concepts bring their proper splendor. The mere possession of such vast and simple pictures is an inspiring good: they arouse new feelings of sublimity, power, and admiration, new interests and motivations.

Ideality often clings to things only when they are taken thus abstractly. "Causes, as anti-slavery, democracy, etc., dwindle when realized in their sordid particulars. Abstractions will touch us when we are callous to the concrete instances in which they lie embodied. Loyal in our measure to particular ideals, we soon set up abstract loyalty as something of a superior order, to be infinitely loyal to; and truth at large becomes a 'momentous issue' compared with which truths in detail are 'poor scraps, mere crumbling successes.'" So strongly do objects that come as universal and eternal arouse our sensibilities, so greatly do life's values deepen when we translate percepts into ideas! The translation appears as far more than the original's equivalent.

*Concepts thus play three distinct parts in human life.*

1. They steer us practically every day, and provide an immense map of relations among the elements of things, which, though not now, yet on some possible future occasion, may help to steer us practically;

2. They bring new values into our perceptual life, they reanimate our wills, and make our action turn upon new points of emphasis;

3. The map which the mind frames out of

them is an object which possesses, when once it has been framed, an independent existence. It suffices all by itself for purposes of study. The "eternal" truths it contains would have to be acknowledged even were the world of sense annihilated.

We thus see clearly what is gained and what is lost when percepts are translated into concepts. Perception is solely of the here and now; conception is of the like and unlike, of the future, of the past, and of the far away. But this map of what surrounds the present, like all maps, is only a surface; its features

are but abstract signs and symbols of things that in themselves are concrete bits of sensible experience. We have but to weigh extent against content, thickness against spread, and we see that for some purposes the one, for other purposes the other, has the higher value. Who can decide offhand which is absolutely better, to live or to understand life? We must do both alternately, and a man can no more limit himself to either than a pair of scissors can cut with a single one of its blades.

## THE ONE AND THE MANY — VALUES AND DEFECTS<sup>1</sup>

WE MIGHT dismiss the subject of the One and the Many were it not for the fact that further consequences follow from the rival hypotheses, and make of the alternative of monism or pluralism what I called the most "pregnant" of all the dilemmas of metaphysics.

To begin with, the attribute "one" seems for many persons to confer a value, an ineffable illustriousness and dignity, upon the world, with which the conception of it as an irreducible "many" is believed to clash.

Secondly, a through-and-through noetic connection of everything with absolutely everything else is in some quarters held to be indispensable to the world's rationality. Only then might we believe that all things really do *belong* together, instead of being connected by the bare conjunctions "with" or "and." The notion that this latter pluralistic arrangement may obtain is deemed "irrational"; and of course it does make the world partly alogical or non-rational from a purely intellectual point of view.

Monism thus holds the oneness to be the more vital and essential element. The entire cosmos must be a consolidated unit, within which each member is determined by the whole to be just that, and from which the slightest incipency of independence any-

where is ruled out. With Spinoza, monism likes to believe that all things follow from the essence of God as necessarily as from the nature of a triangle it follows that the angles are equal to two right angles. The whole is what yields the parts, not the parts the whole. The universe is *right*, monism claims, not loose; and you must take the irreducible whole of it just as it is offered, or have no part or lot in it at all. The only alternative allowed by monistic writers is to confess the world's non-rationality — and no philosopher can permit himself to do that. The form of monism regnant at the present day in philosophic circles is *absolute idealism*. For this way of thinking, the world exists no otherwise than as the object of one infinitely knowing mind. The analogy that suggests the hypothesis here is that of our own finite fields of consciousness, which at every moment envisage a much-at-once composed of parts related variously, and in which both the conjunctions and the disjunctions that appear are there only in so far as we are there as their witnesses, so that they are both "noetically" and monistically based.

We may well admit the sublimity of this noetic monism and of its vague vision of an underlying connection among all phenomena

<sup>1</sup> *Some Problems of Philosophy*, pp. 135-146. New York, 1911. Reprinted with the permission of Longmans, Green and Company.

without exception. It shows itself also able to confer religious stability and peace, and it invokes the authority of mysticism in its favor. Yet, on the other hand, like many another concept unconditionally carried out, it introduces into philosophy puzzles peculiar to itself, as follows:

1. It does not account for our finite consciousness. If nothing exists but as the Absolute Mind knows it, how can anything exist otherwise than as that Mind knows it? That Mind knows each thing in one act of knowledge, along with every other thing. Finite minds know things without other things, and this ignorance is the source of most of their woes. We are thus not simply objects to an all-knowing subject: we are subjects on our own account and know differently from its knowing.

2. It creates a problem of evil. Evil, for pluralism, presents only the practical problem of how to get rid of it. For monism the puzzle is theoretical: How—if Perfection be the source, should there be Imperfection? If the world as known to the Absolute be perfect, why should it be known otherwise, in myriads of inferior finite editions also? The perfect edition surely was enough. How do the breakage and dispersion and ignorance get in?

3. It contradicts the character of reality as perceptually experienced. Of our world, change seems an essential ingredient. There is history. There are novelties, struggles, losses, gains. But the world of the Absolute is represented as unchanging, eternal, or "out of time," and is foreign to our powers either of apprehension or of appreciation. Monism usually treats the sense-world as a mirage or illusion.

4. It is fatalistic. Possibility, as distinguished from necessity on the one hand and from impossibility on the other, is an essential category of human thinking. For monism, it is a pure illusion; for whatever is necessary, and aught else is impossible, if the world be such a unit of fact as monists pretend.

Our sense of "freedom" supposes that some things at least are decided here and now, that the passing moment may contain some nov-

elty, be an original starting-point of events, and not merely transmit a push from elsewhere. We imagine that in some respects at least the future may not be co-implicated with the past, but may be really addable to it, and indeed addable in one shape *or* another, so that the next turn in events can at any given moment genuinely be ambiguous, i.e., possibly this, but also possibly that.

Monism rules out this whole conception of possibles, so native to our common sense. The future and the past are linked, she is obliged to say; there can be no genuine novelty anywhere, for to suppose that the universe has a constitution simply additive, with nothing to link things together save what the words "plus," "with," or "and" stand for, is repugnant to our reason.

Pluralism, on the other hand, taking perceptual experience at its face value, is free from all these difficulties. It protests against working our ideas in a vacuum made of conceptual abstractions. Some parts of our world, it admits, cannot exist out of their wholes; but others, it says, can. To some extent the world *seems* genuinely additive: it may really be so. We cannot explain conceptually *how* genuine novelties can come; but if one did come we could experience *that* it came. We do, in fact, experience perceptual novelties all the while. Our perceptual experience overlaps our conceptual reason: the *that* transcends the *why*. So the common-sense view of life, as something really dramatic, with work done, and things decided here and now, is acceptable to pluralism. "Free will" means nothing but real novelty; so pluralism accepts the notion of free will.

But pluralism, accepting a universe unfinished, with doors and windows open to possibilities uncontrollable in advance, gives us less religious certainty than monism, with its absolutely closed-in world. It is true that monism's religious certainty is not rationally based, but is only a faith that "sees the All-Good in the All-Real." In point of fact, however, monism is usually willing to exert this optimistic faith: its world is certain to be saved, yes, is saved already, unconditionally and from eternity, in spite of all the phenomenal appearances of risk.

A world working out an uncertain destiny as the phenomenal world appears to be doing, is an intolerable idea to the rationalistic mind.

Pluralism, on the other hand, is neither optimistic nor pessimistic, but melioristic, rather. The world, it thinks, may be saved, on condition that its parts shall do their best. But shipwreck in detail, or even on the whole, is among the open possibilities.

There is thus a practical lack of balance about pluralism, which contrasts with monism's peace of mind. The one is a more moral, the other a more religious view; and different men usually let this sort of consideration determine their belief.

So far I have sought only to show the respective implications of the rival doctrines without dogmatically deciding which is the more true. It is obvious that pluralism has three great advantages:

1. It is more "scientific," in that it insists that when oneness is predicated, it shall mean definitely ascertainable conjunctive forms. With these the disjunctions ascertainable among things are exactly on a par. The two are co-ordinate aspects of reality. To make the conjunctions more vital and primordial than the separations, monism has to abandon verifiable experience and proclaim a unity that is indescribable.

2. It agrees more with the moral and dramatic expressiveness of life.

3. It is not obliged to stand for any particular amount of plurality, for it triumphs over monism if the smallest morsel of disconnectedness is once found undeniably to exist. "Ever not quite" is all it says to monism; while monism is obliged to prove that what pluralism asserts can in no amount whatever possibly be true — an infinitely harder task.

The advantages of monism, in turn, are its natural affinity with a certain kind of religious faith, and the peculiar emotional value of the conception that the world is a unitary fact.

So far has our use of the pragmatic rule brought us toward understanding this dilemma. The reader will by this time feel for

himself the essential practical difference which it involves. The word "absence" seems to indicate it. The monistic principle implies that nothing that is can in any way whatever be absent from anything else that is. The pluralistic principle, on the other hand, is quite compatible with some things being absent from operations in which other things find themselves singly or collectively engaged. *Which* things are absent from which other things, and *when*, — these of course are questions which a pluralistic philosophy can settle only by an exact study of details. The past, the present, and the future in perception, for example, are absent from one another, while in imagination they are present or absent as the case may be. If the time-content of the world be not one monistic block of being, if some part, at least, of the future, is added to the past without being virtually one therewith, or implicitly contained therein, then it is absent really as well as phenomenally and may be called an absolute novelty in the world's history in so far forth.

Toward this issue, of the reality or unreality of the novelty that appears, the pragmatic difference between monism and pluralism seems to converge. That we ourselves may be authors of genuine novelty is the thesis of the doctrine of free will. That genuine novelties can occur means that from the point of view of what is already given, what comes may have to be treated as a matter of *chance*. We are led thus to ask the question: In what manner does new being come? Is it through and through the consequence of older being or is it matter of chance so far as older being goes? — which is the same thing as asking: Is it original, in the strict sense of the word?

We connect again here with what was said at the end of Chapter III. We there agreed that being is a datum or gift and has to be begged by the philosopher; but we left the question open as to whether he must beg it all at once or beg it bit by bit or in installments. The latter is the more consistently empiricist view.



PRAGMATISM AND RELIGION<sup>1</sup>

SUPPOSE that the world's author put the case to you before creation, saying: "I am going to make a world not certain to be saved, a world the perfection of which shall be conditional merely, the condition being that each several agent does its own 'level best.' I offer you the chance of taking part in such a world. Its safety, you see, is unwarranted. It is a real adventure, with real danger, yet it may win through. It is a social scheme of co-operative work genuinely to be done. Will you join the procession? Will you trust yourself and trust the other agents enough to face the risk?"

Should you in all seriousness, if participation in such a world were proposed to you, feel bound to reject it as not safe enough? Would you say that, rather than be part and parcel of so fundamentally pluralistic and irrational a universe, you preferred to relapse into the slumber of nonentity from which you had been momentarily aroused by the tempter's voice?

Of course if you are normally constituted, you would do nothing of the sort. There is a healthy-minded buoyancy in most of us which such a universe would exactly fit. We would therefore accept the offer — "Top! und schlag auf schlag!" It would be just like the world we practically live in; and loyalty to our old nurse Nature would forbid us to say no. The world proposed would seem "rational" to us in the most living way.

Most of us, I say, would therefore welcome the proposition and add our fiat to the fiat of the creator. Yet perhaps some would not; for there are morbid minds in every human collection, and to them the prospect of a universe with only a fighting chance of safety would probably make no appeal. There are moments of discouragement in us all, when we are sick of self and tired of vainly striving. Our own life breaks down, and we fall into the attitude of the prodigal son. We mistrust the chances of things. We want a

universe where we can just give up, fall on our father's neck, and be absorbed into the absolute life as a drop of water melts into the river or the sea.

The peace and rest, the security desiderated at such moments is security against the bewildering accidents of so much finite experience. Nirvana means safety from this everlasting round of adventures of which the world of sense consists. The hindoo and the buddhist, for this is essentially their attitude, are simply afraid, afraid of more experience, afraid of life.

And to men of this complexion, religious monism comes with its consoling words: "All is needed and essential — even you with your sick soul and heart. All are one with God, and with God all is well. The everlasting arms are beneath, whether in the world of finite appearance you seem to fail or to succeed." There can be no doubt that when men are reduced to their last sick extremity absolutism is the only saving scheme. Pluralistic moralism simply makes their teeth chatter, it refrigerates the very heart within their breast.

So we see concretely two types of religion in sharp contrast. Using our old terms of comparison, we may say that the absolutistic scheme appeals to the tender-minded while the pluralistic scheme appeals to the tough. Many persons would refuse to call the pluralistic scheme religious at all. They would call it moralistic, and would apply the word religious to the monistic scheme alone. Religion in the sense of self-surrender, and moralism in the sense of self-sufficingness, have been pitted against each other as incompatibles frequently enough in the history of human thought.

We stand here before the final question of philosophy. I said in my fourth lecture that I believed the monistic-pluralistic alternative to be the deepest and most pregnant question that our minds can frame. Can it be that the

<sup>1</sup> *Pragmatism*, pp. 290-97. New York, 1907. Reprinted with the permission of Longmans, Green and Company.



disjunction is a final one? that only one side can be true? Are a pluralism and monism genuine incompatibles? So that, if the world were really pluralistically constituted, if it really existed distributively and were made up of a lot of eases, it could only be saved piecemeal and de facto as the result of their behavior, and its epic history in no wise short-circuited by some essential oneness in which the severalness were already "taken up" beforehand and eternally "overcome"? If this were so, we should have to choose one philosophy or the other. We could not say "yes, yes" to both alternatives. There would have to be a "no" in our relations with the possible. We should confess an ultimate disappointment: we could not remain healthy-minded and sick-minded in one indivisible act.

Of course as human beings we can be healthy minds on one day and sick souls on the next; and as amateur dabblers in philosophy we may perhaps be allowed to call ourselves monistic pluralists, or free-will determinists, or whatever else may occur to us of a reconciling kind. But as philosophers aiming at clearness and consistency, and feeling the pragmatistic need of squaring truth with truth, the question is forced upon us of frankly adopting either the tender or the robustious type of thought. In particular this query has always come home to me: May not the claims of tender-mindedness go too far? May not the notion of a world already saved in toto anyhow, be too saccharine to stand? May not religious optimism be too idyllic? Must all be saved? Is no price to be paid in the work of salvation? Is the last word sweet? Is all "yes, yes" in the universe? Doesn't the fact of "no" stand at the very core of life? Doesn't the very "seriousness" that we attribute to life mean that ineluctable woes and losses form a part of it, that there are genuine sacrifices somewhere, and that something permanently drastic and bitter always remains at the bottom of its cup?

I can not speak officially as a pragmatist here; all I can say is that my own pragmatism

offers no objection to my taking sides with this more moralistic view, and giving up the claim of total reconciliation. The possibility of this is involved in the pragmatistic willingness to treat pluralism as a serious hypothesis. In the end it is our faith and not our logic that decides such questions, and I deny the right of any pretended logic to veto my own faith. I find myself willing to take the universe to be really dangerous and adventurous, without therefore backing out and crying "no play." I am willing to think that the prodigal-son attitude, open to us as it is in many vicissitudes, is not the right and final attitude towards the whole of life. I am willing that there should be real losses and real losers, and no total preservation of all that is. I can believe in the ideal as an ultimate, not as an origin, and as an extract, not the whole. When the cup is poured off, the dregs are left behind forever, but the possibility of what is poured off is sweet enough to accept.

As a matter of fact countless human imaginations live in this moralistic and epic kind of a universe, and find its disseminated and strung-along successes sufficient for their rational needs. There is a finely translated epigram in the Greek anthology which admirably expresses this state of mind, this acceptance of loss as unatoned for, even though the lost element might be one's self:

"A shipwrecked sailor, buried on this coast,  
Bids you set sail.  
Full many a gallant bark, when we were lost,  
Weathered the gale."

Those puritans who answered "yes" to the question: Are you willing to be damned for God's glory? were in this objective and magnanimous condition of mind. The way of escape from evil on this system is *not* by getting it "aufgehoben," or preserved in the whole as an element essential but "overcome." *It is by dropping it out altogether, throwing it overboard and getting beyond it, helping to make a universe that shall forget its very place and name.*

THE WILL TO BELIEVE<sup>1</sup>

## SECTION VIII

AND now, after all this introduction, let us go straight at our question. I have said, and now repeat it, that not only as a matter of fact do we find our passional nature influencing us in our opinions, but that there are some options between opinions in which this influence must be regarded both as an inevitable and as a lawful determinant of our choice.

I fear here that some of you my hearers will begin to scent danger, and lend an inhospitable ear. Two first steps of passion you have indeed had to admit as necessary — we must think so as to avoid dupery, and we must think so as to gain truth; but the surest path to those ideal consummations, you will probably consider, is from now onwards to take no further passional step.

Well, of course, I agree as far as the facts will allow. Wherever the option between losing truth and gaining it is not momentous, we can throw the chance of *gaining truth* away, and at any rate save ourselves from any chance of *believing falsehood*, by not making up our minds at all till objective evidence has come. In scientific questions, this is almost always the case; and even in human affairs in general, the need of acting is seldom so urgent that a false belief to act on is better than no belief at all. Law courts, indeed, have to decide on the best evidence attainable for the moment, because a judge's duty is to make law as well as to ascertain it, and (as a learned judge once said to me) few cases are worth spending much time over: the great thing is to have them decided on *any* acceptable principle, and got out of the way. But in our dealings with objective nature we obviously are recorders, not makers, of the truth; and decisions for the mere sake of deciding promptly and getting on to the next business would be wholly out of place. Throughout the breadth of physical nature facts are what

they are quite independently of us, and seldom is there any such hurry about them that the risks of being duped by believing a premature theory need be faced. The questions here are always trivial options, the hypotheses are hardly living (at any rate not living for us spectators), the choice between believing truth or falsehood is seldom forced. The attitude of sceptical balance is therefore the absolutely wise one if we would escape mistakes. What difference, indeed, does it make to most of us whether we have or have not a theory of the Röntgen rays, whether we believe or not in mind-stuff, or have a conviction about the causality of conscious states? It makes no difference. Such options are not forced on us. On every account it is better not to make them, but still keep weighing reasons *pro et contra* with an indifferent hand.

I speak, of course, here of the purely judging mind. For purposes of discovery such indifference is to be less highly recommended, and science would be far less advanced than she is if the passionate desires of individuals to get their own faiths confirmed had been kept out of the game. See for example the sagacity which Spencer and Weismann now display. On the other hand, if you want an absolute duffer in an investigation, you must, after all, take the man who has no interest whatever in its results: he is the warranted incapable, the positive fool. The most useful investigator, because the most sensitive observer, is always he whose eager interest in one side of the question is balanced by an equally keen nervousness lest he become deceived. Science has organized this nervousness into a regular *technique*, her so-called method of verification; and she has fallen so deeply in love with the method that one may even say she has ceased to care for truth by itself at all. It is only truth as technically verified that interests her. The truth of truths might come in merely affirmative form, and she would decline to touch it. Such

<sup>1</sup> *The Will to Believe*. New York, 1897. Reprinted with the permission of Longmans, Green and Company.

truth as that, she might repeat with Clifford, would be stolen in defiance of her duty to mankind. Human passions, however, are stronger than technical rules. "*Le coeur a ses raisons*," as Pascal says, "*que la raison ne connaît pas*"; and however indifferent to all but the bare rules of the game the umpire, the abstract intellect, may be, the concrete players who furnish him the materials to judge of are usually, each one of them, in love with some pet "live hypothesis" of his own. Let us agree, however, that wherever there is no forced option, the dispassionately judicial intellect with no pet hypothesis, saving us, as it does, from dupery at any rate, ought to be our ideal.

The question next arises: Are there not somewhere forced options in our speculative questions, and can we (as men who may be interested at least as much in positively gaining truth as in merely escaping dupery) always wait with impunity till the coercive evidence shall have arrived? It seems *a priori* improbable that the truth should be so nicely adjusted to our needs and powers as that. In the great boarding-house of nature, the cakes and the butter and the syrup seldom come out so even and leave the plates so clean. Indeed, we should view them with scientific suspicion if they did.

#### SECTION IX

*Moral questions* immediately present themselves as questions whose solution cannot wait for sensible proof. A moral question is a question not of what sensibly exists, but of what is good, or would be good if it did exist. Science can tell us what exists; but to compare the *worths*, both of what exists and of what does not exist, we must consult not science, but what Pascal calls our heart. Science herself consults her heart when she lays it down that the infinite ascertainment of fact and correction of false belief are the supreme goods for man. Challenge the statement, and science can only repeat it oracularly, or else prove it by showing that such ascertainment and correction bring man all sorts of other goods which man's heart in turn declares. The question of having moral

beliefs at all or not having them is decided by our will. Are our moral preferences true or false or are they only odd biological phenomena, making things good or bad for *us*, but in themselves indifferent? How can your pure intellect decide? If your heart does not *want* a world of moral reality, your head will assuredly never make you believe in one. Mephistophelian scepticism, indeed, will satisfy the head's play-instincts much better than any rigorous idealism can. Some men (even at the student age) are so naturally cool-hearted that the moralistic hypothesis never has for them any pungent life, and in their supercilious presence the hot young moralist always feels strangely ill at ease. The appearance of knowingness is on their side, of naïveté and gullibility on his. Yet, in the articulate heart of him, he clings to it that he is not a dupe, and that there is a realm in which (as Emerson says) all their wit and intellectual superiority is no better than the cunning of a fox. Moral scepticism can no more be refuted or proved by logic than intellectual scepticism can. When we stick to it that there *is* truth (be it of either kind), we do so with our whole nature, and resolve to stand or fall by the results. The sceptic with his whole nature adopts the doubting attitude; but which of us is the wiser, Omniscience only knows.

Turn now from these wide questions of good to a certain class of questions of fact, questions concerning personal relations, states of mind between one man and another. *Do you like me or not?* — for example. Whether you do or not depends, in countless instances, on whether I meet you halfway, am willing to assume that you must like me, and show you trust and expectation. The previous faith on my part in your liking's existence is in such cases what makes your liking come. But if I stand aloof, and refuse to budge an inch until I have objective evidence, until you shall have done something apt, as the absolutists say, *ad extorquendum assensum meum*, ten to one your liking never comes. How many women's hearts are vanquished by the mere sanguine insistence of some man that they *must* love him! he will not consent to the hypothesis that they cannot. The desire

for a certain kind of truth here brings about that special truth's existence; and so it is in innumerable cases of other sorts. Who gains promotions, boons, appointments, but the man in whose life they are seen to play the part of live hypotheses, who discounts them, sacrifices other things for their sake before they have come, and takes risks for them in advance? His faith acts on the powers above him as a claim, and creates its own verification.

A social organism of any sort whatever, large or small, is what it is because each member proceeds to his own duty with a trust that the other members will simultaneously do theirs. Wherever a desired result is achieved by the co-operation of many independent persons, its existence as a fact is a pure consequence of the precursive faith in one another of those immediately concerned. A government, an army, a commercial system, a ship, a college, an athletic team, all exist on this condition, without which not only is nothing achieved, but nothing is even attempted. A whole train of passengers (individually brave enough) will be looted by a few highwaymen, simply because the latter can count on one another, while each passenger fears that if he makes a movement of resistance, he will be shot before anyone else backs him up. If we believed that the whole car-full would rise at once with us, we should each severally rise, and train-robbing would never even be attempted. There are, then, cases where a fact cannot come at all unless a preliminary faith exists in its coming. *And where faith in a fact can help create the fact*, that would be an insane logic which should say that faith running ahead of scientific evidence is the "lowest kind of immorality" into which a thinking being can fall. Yet such is the logic by which our scientific absolutists pretend to regulate our lives!

#### SECTION X

In truths dependent on our personal action, then, faith based on desire is certainly a lawful and possibly an indispensable thing.

But now, it will be said, these are all childish human cases, and have nothing to do

with great cosmical matters, like the question of religious faith. Let us then pass on to that. Religions differ so much in their accidents that in discussing the religious question we must make it very generic and broad. What then do we now mean by the religious hypothesis? Science says things are; morality says some things are better than other things; and religion says essentially two things.

First, she says that the best things are the more eternal things, the overlapping things, the things in the universe that throw the last stone, so to speak, and say the final word. "Perfection is eternal" — this phrase of Charles Secrétan seems a good way of putting this first affirmation of religion, an affirmation which obviously cannot yet be verified scientifically at all.

The second affirmation of religion is that we are better off even now if we believe her first affirmation to be true.

Now, let us consider what the logical elements of this situation are *in case the religious hypothesis in both its branches be really true*. (Of course, we must admit that possibility at the outset. If we are to discuss the question at all, it must involve a living option. If for any of you religion be a hypothesis that cannot, by any living possibility be true, then you need go no farther. I speak to the "saving remnant" alone.) So proceeding, we see, first, that religion offers itself as a *momentous* option. We are supposed to gain, even now, by our belief, and to lose by our non-belief, a certain vital good. Secondly, religion is a *forced* option, so far as that good goes. We cannot escape the issue by remaining sceptical and waiting for more light, because, although we do avoid error in that way *if religion be untrue*, we lose the good, *if it be true*, just as certainly as if we positively chose to disbelieve. It is as if a man should hesitate indefinitely to ask a certain woman to marry him because he was not perfectly sure that she would prove an angel after he brought her home. Would he not cut himself off from that particular angel-possibility as decisively as if he went and married someone else? Scepticism, then, is not avoidance of option; it is option of a certain particular

kind of risk. *Better risk loss of truth than chance of error* — that is your faith-vetoer's exact position. He is actively playing his stake as much as the believer is; he is backing the field against the religious hypothesis, just as the believer is backing the religious hypothesis against the field. To preach scepticism to us as a duty until "sufficient evidence" for religion be found, is tantamount therefore to telling us, when in presence of the religious hypothesis, that to yield to our fear of its being error is wiser and better than to yield to our hope that it may be true. It is not intellect against all passions, then; it is only intellect with one passion laying down its law. And by what, forsooth, is the supreme wisdom of this passion warranted? Dupery for dupery, what proof is there that dupery through hope is so much worse than dupery through fear? I, for one, can see no proof; and I simply refuse obedience to the scientist's command to imitate his kind of option, in a case where my own stake is important enough to give me the right to choose my own form of risk. If religion be true and the evidence for it be still insufficient, I do not wish, by putting your extinguisher upon my nature (which feels to me as if it had after all some business in this matter), to forfeit my sole chance in life of getting upon the winning side — that chance depending, of course, on my willingness to run the risk of acting as if my passionate need of taking the world religiously might be prophetic and right.

All this is on the supposition that it really may be prophetic and right, and that, even to us who are discussing the matter, religion is a live hypothesis which may be true. Now, to most of us religion comes in a still further way that makes a veto on our active faith even more illogical. The more perfect and more eternal aspect of the universe is represented in our religions as having personal form. The universe is no longer a mere *It* to us, but a *Thou*, if we are religious; and any relation that may be possible from person to person might be possible here. For instance, although in one sense we are passive portions of the universe, in another we show a curious autonomy, as if we were small

active centres on our own account. We feel, too, as if the appeal of religion to us were made to our own active good-will, as if evidence might be forever withheld from us unless we met the hypothesis halfway. To take a trivial illustration: just as a man who in a company of gentlemen made no advances, asked a warrant for every concession, and believed no one's word without proof, would cut himself off by such churlishness from all the social rewards that a more trusting spirit would earn — so here, one who should shut himself up in snarling logicity and try to make the gods extort his recognition willy-nilly, or not get it at all, might cut himself off forever from his only opportunity of making the gods' acquaintance. This feeling, forced on us we know not whence, that by obstinately believing that there are gods (although not to do so would be so easy both for our logic and our life) we are doing the universe the deepest service we can, seems part of the living essence of the religious hypothesis. If the hypothesis *were* true in all its parts, including this one, then pure intellectualism, with its veto on our making willing advances, would be an absurdity; and some participation of our sympathetic nature would be logically required. I, therefore, for one, cannot see my way to accepting the agnostic rules for truth-seeking, or willingly agree to keep my willing nature out of the game. I cannot do so for this plain reason, that *a rule of thinking which would absolutely prevent me from acknowledging certain kinds of truth if those kinds of truth were really there, would be an irrational rule*. That for me is the long and short of the formal logic of the situation, no matter what the kinds of truth might materially be.

I confess I do not see how this logic can be escaped. But sad experience makes me fear that some of you may still shrink from radically saying with me, *in abstracto*, that we have the right to believe at our own risk any hypothesis that is live enough to tempt our will. I suspect, however, that if this is so, it is because you have got away from the abstract logical point of view altogether, and are thinking (perhaps without realizing

it) of some particular religious hypothesis which for you is dead. The freedom to "believe what we will" you apply to the case of some patent superstition; and the faith you think of is the faith defined by the schoolboy when he said, "Faith is when you believe something that you know ain't true." I can only repeat that this is misapprehension. *In concreto*, the freedom to believe can only cover living options which the intellect of the individual cannot by itself resolve; and living options never seem absurdities to him who has them to consider. When I look at the religious question as it really puts itself to concrete men, and when I think of all the possibilities which both practically and theoretically it involves, then this command that we shall put a stopper on our heart, instincts, and courage, and *wait* — acting of course meanwhile more or less as if religion were *not* true — till doomsday, or till such time as our intellect and senses working together may have raked in evidence enough — this command, I say, seems to me the queerest idol ever manufactured in the philosophic cave. Were we scholastic absolutists, there might be more excuse. If we had an infallible intellect with its objective certitudes, we might feel ourselves disloyal to such a perfect organ of knowledge in not trusting to it exclusively, in not waiting for its releasing word. But if we are empiricists, if we believe that no bell in us tolls to let us know for certain when truth is in our grasp, then it seems a piece of idle fantasticality to preach so solemnly our duty of waiting for the bell. Indeed we *may* wait if we will — I hope you do not think that I am denying that — but if we do so, we do so at our peril as much as if we believed. In either case we *act*, taking our life in our hands. No one of us ought to issue vetoes to the other, nor should we bandy

words of abuse. We ought, on the contrary, delicately and profoundly to respect one another's mental freedom: then only shall we bring about the intellectual republic; then only shall we have that spirit of inner tolerance without which all our outer tolerance is soulless, and which is empiricism's glory; then only shall we live and let live, in speculative as well as in practical things.

I began by a reference to Fitz James Stephen; let me end by a quotation from him. "What do you think of yourself? What do you think of the world? . . . These are questions with which all must deal as it seems good to them. They are riddles of the Sphinx, and in some way or other we must deal with them. . . . In all important transactions of life we have to take a leap in the dark. . . . If we decide to leave the riddles unanswered, that is a choice; if we waver in our answer, that, too, is a choice: but whatever choice we make, we make it at our peril. If a man chooses to turn his back altogether on God and the future, no one can prevent him; no one can show beyond reasonable doubt that he is mistaken. If a man thinks otherwise and acts as he thinks, I do not see that anyone can prove that *he* is mistaken. Each must act as he thinks best; and if he is wrong, so much the worse for him. We stand on a mountain pass in the midst of whirling snow and blinding mist, through which we get glimpses now and then of paths which may be deceptive. If we stand still we shall be frozen to death. If we take the wrong road we shall be dashed to pieces. We do not certainly know whether there is any right one. What must we do? 'Be strong and of a good courage.' Act for the best, hope for the best, and take what comes. . . . If death ends all, we cannot meet death better."

WILL<sup>1</sup>

... IF THE "searching of our heart and reins" be the purpose of this human drama, then what is sought seems to be what effort we can make. He who can make none is but a shadow; he who can make much is a hero. The huge world that girdles us about puts all sorts of questions to us, and tests us in all sorts of ways. Some of the tests we meet by actions that are easy, and some of the questions we answer in articulately formulated words. But the deepest question that is ever asked admits of no reply but the dumb turning of the will and tightening of our heart-strings as we say, "*Yes, I will even have it so!*" When a dreadful object is presented, or when life as a whole turns up its dark abysses to our view, then the worthless ones among us lose their hold on the situation altogether, and either escape from its difficulties by averting their attention, or if they cannot do that, collapse into yielding masses of plaintiveness and fear. The effort required for facing and consenting to such objects is beyond their power to make. But the heroic mind does differently. To it, too, the objects are sinister and dreadful, unwelcome, incompatible with wished-for things. But it can face them if necessary, without for that losing its hold upon the rest of life. The world thus finds in the heroic man its worthy match and mate; and the effort which he is able to put forth to hold himself erect and keep his heart unshaken is the direct measure of his worth and function in the game of human life. He can *stand* this universe. He can meet it and keep up his faith in it in presence of those same features which lay his weaker brethren low. He can still find a zest in it, not by "ostrich-like forgetful-

ness," but by pure inward willingness to face the world with those deterrent objects there. And hereby he becomes one of the masters and the lords of life. He must be counted with henceforth; he forms a part of human destiny. Neither in the theoretic nor in the practical sphere do we care for, or go for help to, those who have no head for risks, or sense for living on the perilous edge. Our religious life lies more, our practical life lies less, than it used to, on the perilous edge. But just as our courage is so often a reflex of another's courage, so our faith is apt to be, as Max Müller somewhere says, a faith in someone else's faith. We draw new life from the heroic example. The prophet has drunk more deeply than anyone of the cup of bitterness, but his countenance is so unshaken and he speaks such mighty words of cheer that his will becomes our will, and our life is kindled at his own.

Thus not only our morality but our religion, so far as the latter is deliberate, depend on the effort which we can make. "*Will you or won't you have it so?*" is the most probing question we are ever asked; we are asked it every hour of the day, and about the largest as well as the smallest, the most theoretical as well as the most practical, things. We answer by *consents or non-consents* and not by words. What wonder that these dumb responses should seem our deepest organs of communication with the nature of things! What wonder if the effort demanded by them be the measure of our worth as men! What wonder if the amount which we accord of it be the one strictly underived and original contribution which we make to the world.

<sup>1</sup> *Principles of Psychology*, vol. 2, pp. 578-79. New York, 1890. Reprinted with the permission of Henry Holt and Company.

# John Dewey

(1859- )

JOHN DEWEY was born in Burlington, Vermont, on October 20, 1859. He took his undergraduate work in the University of Vermont, and received his Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins in 1884. He taught in the Universities of Michigan and Minnesota, and was at the University of Chicago for ten years. From 1904 until his retirement in 1929 he taught at Columbia University. He was in Peking, China, for two years, teaching and aiding in the reorganization of the educational system, and for briefer periods was in Turkey, Mexico, and the U.S.S.R. His interests are indicated by the range of his writings, which include books in the fields of philosophy, logic, education, religion, art, and politics.

## THE NEED FOR A RECOVERY OF PHILOSOPHY<sup>1</sup>

### I

A CRITICISM of current philosophizing from the standpoint of the traditional quality of its problems must begin somewhere, and the choice of a beginning is arbitrary. It has appeared to me that the notion of experience implied in the questions most actively discussed gives a natural point of departure. For, if I mistake not, it is just the inherited view of experience common to the empirical school and its opponents which keeps alive many discussions even of matters that on their face are quite remote from it, while it is also this view which is most untenable in the light of existing science and social practice. Accordingly I set out with a brief statement of some of the chief contrasts between the

orthodox description of experience and that congenial to present conditions.

(i) In the orthodox view, experience is regarded primarily as a knowledge-affair. But to eyes not looking through ancient spectacles, it assuredly appears as an affair of the intercourse of a living being with its physical and social environment. (ii) According to tradition experience is (at least primarily) a psychical thing, infected throughout by "subjectivity." What experience suggests about itself is a genuinely objective world which enters into the actions and sufferings of men and undergoes modifications through their responses. (iii) So far as anything beyond a bare present is recognized by the established doctrine, the past exclusively

<sup>1</sup> *Creative Intelligence: Essays in the Pragmatic Attitude* by John Dewey and others, pp. 6-14, 29-53, 58-59, 63-69. New York, 1917. Reprinted with the permission of Henry Holt and Company.



counts. Registration of what has taken place, reference to precedent, is believed to be the essence of experience. Empiricism is conceived of as tied up to what has been, or is, "given." But experience in its vital form is experimental, an effort to change the given; it is characterized by projection, by reaching forward into the unknown; connection with a future is its salient trait. (iv) The empirical tradition is committed to particularism. Connections and continuities are supposed to be foreign to experience, to be by-products of dubious validity. An experience that is an undergoing of an environment and a striving for its control in new directions is pregnant with connections. (v) In the traditional notion experience and thought are antithetical terms. Inference, so far as it is other than a revival of what has been given in the past, goes beyond experience; hence it is either invalid, or else a measure of desperation by which, using experience as a springboard, we jump out to a world of stable things and other selves. But experience, taken free of the restrictions imposed by the older concept, is full of inference. There is, apparently, no conscious experience without inference; reflection is native and constant.

These contrasts, with a consideration of the effect of substituting the account of experience relevant to modern life for the inherited account, afford the subject-matter of the following discussion.

Suppose we take seriously the contribution made to our idea of experience by biology, not that recent biological science discovered the facts, but that it has so emphasized them that there is no longer an excuse for ignoring them or treating them as negligible. Any account of experience must now fit into the consideration that experiencing means living; and that living goes on in and because of an environing medium, not in a vacuum. Where there is experience, there is a living being. Where there is life, there is a double connection maintained with the environment. In part, environmental energies constitute organic functions; they enter into them. Life is not possible without such direct support by the environment.|| But while all organic

changes depend upon the natural energies of the environment for their origination and occurrence, the natural energies sometimes carry the organic functions prosperously forward, and sometimes act counter to their continuance. Growth and decay, health and disease, are alike continuous with activities of the natural surroundings. The difference lies in the bearing of what happens upon future life-activity. From the standpoint of this future reference environmental incidents fall into groups: those favorable to life-activities, and those hostile.

The successful activities of the organism, those within which environmental assistance is incorporated, react upon the environment to bring about modifications favorable to their own future. The human being has upon his hands the problem of responding to what is going on around him so that these changes will take one turn rather than another, namely, that required by its own further functioning. While backed in part by the environment, its life is anything but a peaceful exhalation of environment. It is obliged to struggle — that is to say, to employ the direct support given by the environment in order indirectly to effect changes that would not otherwise occur. In this sense, life goes on by means of controlling the environment. Its activities must change the changes going on around it; they must neutralize hostile occurrences; they must transform neutral events into co-operative factors or into an efflorescence of new features.

Dialectic developments of the notion of self-preservation, of the *conatus essendi*, often ignore all the important facts of the actual process. They argue as if self-control, self-development, went on directly as a sort of unrolling push from within. But life endures only in virtue of the support of the environment. And since the environment is only incompletely enlisted in our behalf, self-preservation — or self-realization or whatever — is always indirect — always an affair of the way in which our present activities affect the direction taken by independent changes in the surroundings. Hindrances must be turned into means.

We are also given to playing loose with the

conception of adjustment, as if that meant something fixed — a kind of accommodation once for all (ideally at least) of the organism to an environment. But as life requires the fitness of the environment to the organic functions, adjustment to the environment means not passive acceptance of the latter, but acting so that the environing changes take a certain turn. The "higher" the type of life, the more adjustment takes the form of an adjusting of the factors of the environment to one another in the interest of life; the less the significance of living, the more it becomes an adjustment to a given environment till at the lower end of the scale the differences between living and the non-living disappear.

These statements are of an external kind. They are about the conditions of experience, rather than about experiencing itself. But assuredly experience as it concretely takes place bears out the statements. Experience is primarily a process of undergoing: a process of standing something; of suffering and passion, of affection, in the literal sense of these words. The organism has to endure, to undergo, the consequences of its own actions. Experience is no slipping along in a path fixed by inner consciousness. Private consciousness is an incidental outcome of experience of a vital objective sort; it is not its source. Undergoing, however, is never mere passivity. The most patient patient is more than a receptor. He is also an agent — a reactor, one trying experiments, one concerned with undergoing in a way which may influence what is still to happen. Sheer endurance, side-stepping evasions, are, after all, ways of treating the environment with a view to what such treatment will accomplish. Even if we shut ourselves up in the most clam-like fashion, we are doing something; our passivity is an active attitude, not an extinction of response. Just as there is no assertive action, no aggressive attack upon things as they are, which is all action, so there is no undergoing which is not on our part also a going on and a going through.

Experience, in other words, is a matter of *simultaneous* doings and sufferings. Our undergoings are experiments in varying the

course of events; our active tryings are trials and tests of ourselves. This duplicity of experience shows itself in our happiness and misery, our successes and failures. Triumphs are dangerous when dwelt upon or lived off from, successes use themselves up. Any achieved equilibrium of adjustment with the environment is precarious because we cannot evenly keep pace with changes in the environment. These are so opposed in direction that we must choose. We must take the risk of casting in our lot with one movement or the other. Nothing can eliminate all risk, all adventure; the one thing doomed to failure is to try to keep even with the whole environment at once — that is to say, to maintain the happy moment when all things go our way.

The obstacles which confront us are stimuli to variation, to novel response, and hence are occasions of progress. If a favor done us by the environment conceals a threat, so its disfavor is a potential means of hitherto unexperienced modes of success. To treat misery as anything but misery, as for example a blessing in disguise or a necessary factor in good, is disingenuous apologetics. But to say that the progress of the race has been stimulated by ills undergone, and that men have been moved by what they suffer to search out new and better courses of action is to speak veraciously.

The preoccupation of experience with things which are coming (are now coming, not just to come) is obvious to anyone whose interest in experience is empirical. Since we live forward; since we live in a world where changes are going on whose issue means our weal or woe; since every act of ours modifies these changes and hence is fraught with promise, or charged with hostile energies — what should experience be but a future implicated in a present! Adjustment is no timeless state; it is a continuing process. To say that a change takes time may be to say something about the event which is external and uninstrusive. But adjustment of organism to environment takes time in the pregnant sense; every step in the process is conditioned by reference to further changes which it effects. What is going on in the

environment is the concern of the organism; not what is already "there" in accomplished and finished form. In so far as the issue of what is going on may be affected by intervention of the organism, the moving event is a challenge which stretches the agent-patient to meet what is coming. Experiencing exhibits things in their untermated aspect moving toward determinate conclusions. The finished and done with is of import as affecting the future, not on its own account: in short, because it is not, really, done with.

Anticipation is therefore more primary than recollection; projection than summoning of the past; the prospective than the retrospective. Given a world like that in which we live, a world in which environing changes are partly favorable and partly callously indifferent, and experience is bound to be prospective in import; for any control attainable by the living creature depends upon what is done to alter the state of things. Success and failure are the primary "categories" of life; achieving of good and averting of ill are its supreme interests; hope and anxiety (which are not self-enclosed states of feeling, but active attitudes of welcome and wariness) are dominant qualities of experience. Imaginative forecast of the future is this forerunning quality of behavior rendered available for guidance in the present. Day-dreaming and castle-building and esthetic realization of what is not practically achieved are offshoots of this practical trait, or else practical intelligence is a chastened fantasy. It makes little difference. Imaginative recovery of the bygone is indispensable to successful invasion of the future, but its status is that of an instrument. To ignore its import is the sign of an undisciplined agent; but to isolate the past, dwelling upon it for its own sake and giving it the eulogistic name of knowledge, is to substitute the reminiscence of old age for effective intelligence. The movement of the agent-patient to meet the future is partial and passionate; yet detached and impartial study of the past is the only alternative to luck in assuring success to passion.

## IV

Why has the description of experience been so remote from the facts of empirical situations? To answer this question throws light upon the submergence of recent philosophizing in epistemology — that is, in discussions of the nature, possibility, and limits of knowledge in general, and in the attempt to reach conclusions regarding the ultimate nature of reality from the answers given to such questions.

The reply to the query regarding the currency of a non-empirical doctrine of experience (even among professed empiricists) is that the traditional account is derived from a conception once universally entertained regarding the subject or bearer or center of experience. The description of experience has been forced into conformity with this prior conception; it has been primarily a deduction from it, actual empirical facts being poured into the moulds of the deductions. The characteristic feature of this prior notion is the assumption that experience centers in, or gathers about, or proceeds from a center or subject which is outside the course of natural existence, and set over against it: — it being of no importance, for present purposes, whether this antithetical subject is termed soul, or spirit, or mind, or ego, or consciousness, or just knower or knowing subject.

There are plausible grounds for thinking that the currency of the idea in question lies in the form which men's religious preoccupations took for many centuries. These were deliberately and systematically otherworldly. They centered about a Fall which was not an event in Nature, but an aboriginal catastrophe that corrupted Nature; about a redemption made possible by supernatural means; about a life in another world — essentially, not merely spatially, Other. The supreme drama of destiny took place in a soul or spirit which, under the circumstances, could not be conceived other than as non-natural — extra-natural, if not, strictly speaking, supernatural. When Descartes and others broke away from medieval interests, they retained as commonplaces its intellectual apparatus: Such as, knowledge is

exercised by a power that is extra-natural and set over against the world to be known. Even if they had wished to make a complete break, they had nothing to put as knower in the place of the soul. It may be doubted whether there was any available empirical substitute until science worked out the fact that physical changes are functional correlations of energies, and that man is continuous with other forms of life, and until social life had developed an intellectually free and responsible individual as its agent.

But my main point is not dependent upon any particular theory as to the historic origin of the notion about the bearer of experience. The point is there on its own account. The essential thing is that the bearer was conceived as outside of the world; so that experience consisted in the bearer's being affected through a type of operations not found anywhere in the world, while knowledge consists in surveying the world, looking at it, getting the view of a spectator.

The theological problem of attaining knowledge of God as ultimate reality was transformed in effect into the philosophical problem of the possibility of attaining knowledge of reality. For how is one to get beyond the limits of the subject and subjective occurrences? Familiarity breeds credulity oftener than contempt. How can a problem be artificial when men have been busy discussing it for almost three hundred years? But if the assumption that experience is something set over against the world is contrary to fact, then the problem of how self or mind or subjective experience or consciousness can reach knowledge of an external world is assuredly a meaningless problem. Whatever questions there may be about knowledge, they will not be the kind of problems which have formed epistemology.

The problem of knowledge as conceived in the industry of epistemology is the problem of knowledge *in general* — of the possibility, extent, and validity of knowledge in general. What does this "in general" mean? In ordinary life there are problems a-plenty of knowledge in particular; every conclusion we try to reach, theoretical or practical, affords such a problem. But there is no problem of

knowledge in general. I do not mean, of course, that general statements cannot be made about knowledge, or that the problem of attaining these general statements is not a genuine one. On the contrary, specific instances of success and failure in inquiry exist, and are of such a character that one can discover the conditions conducing to success and failure. Statement of these conditions constitutes logic, and is capable of being an important aid in proper guidance of further attempts at knowing. But this logical problem of knowledge is at the opposite pole from the epistemological. Specific problems are about right conclusions to be reached — which means, in effect, right ways of going about the business of inquiry. They imply a difference between knowledge and error consequent upon right and wrong methods of inquiry and testing; not a difference between experience and the world. The problem of knowledge *überhaupt* exists because it is assumed that there is a knower in general, who is outside of the world to be known, and who is defined in terms antithetical to the traits of the world. With analogous assumptions, we could invent and discuss a problem of digestion in general. All that would be required would be to conceive the stomach and food-material as inhabiting different worlds. Such an assumption would leave on our hands the question of the possibility, extent, nature, and genuineness of any transaction between stomach and food.

But because the stomach and food inhabit a continuous stretch of existence, because digestion is but a correlation of diverse activities in one world, the problems of digestion are specific and plural: What are the particular correlations which constitute it? How does it proceed in different situations? What is favorable and what unfavorable to its best performance? — and so on. Can one deny that if we were to take our clue from the present empirical situation, including the scientific notion of evolution (biological continuity) and the existing arts of control of nature, subject and object would be treated as occupying the same natural world as unhesitatingly as we assume the natural conjunction of an animal and its food? Would it

not follow that knowledge is one way in which natural energies co-operate? Would there be any problem save discovery of the peculiar structure of this co-operation, the conditions under which it occurs to best effect, and the consequences which issue from its occurrence?

It is a commonplace that the chief divisions of modern philosophy, idealism in its different kinds, realisms of various brands, so-called common-sense dualism, agnosticism, relativism, phenomenism, have grown up around the epistemological problem of the general relation of subject and object. Problems not openly epistemological, such as whether the relation of changes in consciousness to physical changes is one of interaction, parallelism, or automatism, have the same origin. What becomes of philosophy, consisting largely as it does of different answers to these questions, in case the assumptions which generate the questions have no empirical standing? Is it not time that philosophers turned from the attempt to determine the comparative merits of various replies to the questions to a consideration of the claims of the questions?

When dominating religious ideas were built up about the idea that the self is a stranger and pilgrim in this world; when morals, falling in line, found true good only in inner states of a self inaccessible to anything but its own private introspection; when political theory assumed the finality of disconnected and mutually exclusive personalities, the notion that the bearer of experience is antithetical to the world instead of being in and of it was congenial. It at least had the warrant of other beliefs and aspirations. But the doctrine of biological continuity or organic evolution has destroyed the scientific basis of the conception. Morally, men are now concerned with the amelioration of the conditions of the common lot in this world. Social sciences recognize that associated life is not a matter of physical juxtaposition, but of genuine intercourse — of community of experience in a non-metaphorical sense of community. Why should we longer try to patch up and refine and stretch the old solutions till they seem to cover the change of

thought and practice? Why not recognize that the trouble is with the problem?

A belief in organic evolution which does not extend unreservedly to the way in which the subject of experience is thought of, and which does not strive to bring the entire theory of experience and knowing into line with biological and social facts, is hardly more than Pickwickian. There are many, for example, who hold that dreams, hallucinations, and errors cannot be accounted for at all except on the theory that a self (or "consciousness") exercises a modifying influence upon the "real object." The logical assumption is that consciousness is outside of the real object; that it is something different in kind, and therefore has the power of changing "reality" into appearance, of introducing "relativities" into things as they are in themselves — in short, of infecting real things with subjectivity. Such writers seem unaware of the fact that this assumption makes consciousness supernatural in the literal sense of the word; and that, to say the least, the conception can be accepted by one who accepts the doctrine of biological continuity only after every other way of dealing with the facts has been exhausted.

Realists, of course (at least some of the Neo-realists), deny any such miraculous intervention of consciousness. But they admit the reality of the problem; denying only this particular solution, they try to find some other way out, which will still preserve intact the notion of knowledge as a relationship of a general sort between subject and object.

Now dreams and hallucinations, errors, pleasures, and pains, possibly "secondary" qualities, do not occur save where there are organic centers of experience. They cluster about a subject. But to treat them as things which inhere exclusively in the subject; or as posing the problem of a distortion of *the* real object by a knower set over against the world, or as presenting facts to be explained primarily as cases of contemplative knowledge, is to testify that one has still to learn the lesson of evolution in its application to the affairs in hand.

If biological development be accepted, the subject of experience is at least an animal, con-

tinuous with other organic forms in a process of more complex organization. An animal in turn is at least continuous with chemico-physical processes which, in living things, are so organized as really to constitute the activities of life with all their defining traits. And experience is not identical with brain action; it is the entire organic agent-patient in all its interaction with the environment, natural and social. The brain is primarily an organ of a certain kind of behavior, not of knowing the world. And to repeat what has already been said, experiencing *is* just certain modes of interaction, of correlation, of natural objects among which the organism happens, so to say, to be one. It follows with equal force that experience means primarily not knowledge, but ways of doing and suffering. Knowing must be described by discovering what particular mode — qualitatively unique — of doing and suffering it is. As it is, we find experience assimilated to a non-empirical concept of knowledge, derived from an antecedent notion of a spectator outside of the world.

In short, the epistemological fashion of conceiving dreams, errors, "relativities," etc., depends upon the isolation of mind from intimate participation with other changes in the same continuous nexus. Thus it is like contending that when a bottle bursts, the bottle is, in some self-contained miraculous way, exclusively responsible. Since it is the nature of a bottle to be whole so as to retain fluids, bursting is an abnormal event — comparable to an hallucination. Hence it cannot belong to the "real" bottle; the "subjectivity" of glass is the cause. It is obvious that since the breaking of glass is a case of specific correlation of natural energies, its accidental and abnormal character has to do with *consequences*, not with causation. Accident is interference with the consequences for which the bottle is intended. The bursting considered apart from its bearing on these consequences is on a plane with any other occurrence in the wide world. But from the standpoint of a desired future, bursting is an anomaly, an interruption of the course of events.

The analogy with the occurrence of dreams,

hallucinations, etc., seems to me exact. Dreams are not something outside of the regular course of events; they are in and of it. They are not cognitive distortions of real things; they are *more* real things. There is nothing abnormal in their existence, any more than there is in the bursting of a bottle. But they may be abnormal, from the standpoint of their influence, of their operation as stimuli in calling out responses to modify the future. Dreams have often been taken as prognostics of what is to happen; they have modified conduct. An hallucination may lead a man to consult a doctor; such a consequence is right and proper. But the consultation indicates that the subject regarded it as an indication of consequences which he feared: as a symptom of a disturbed life. Or the hallucination may lead him to anticipate consequences which in fact flow only from the possession of great wealth. Then the hallucination is a disturbance of the normal course of events; the occurrence is wrongly *used* with reference to eventualities.

To regard reference to use and to desired and intended consequences as involving a "subjective" factor is to miss the point, for this has regard to the future. The uses to which a bottle are put are not mental; they do not consist of physical states; they are further correlations of natural existences. Consequences in use are genuine natural events; but they do not occur without the intervention of behavior involving anticipation of a future. The case is not otherwise with an hallucination. The differences it makes are in any case differences in the course of the one continuous world. The important point is whether they are good or bad differences. To use the hallucination as a sign of organic lesions that menace health means the beneficial result of seeing a physician; to respond to it as a sign of consequences such as actually follow only from being persecuted is to fall into error — to be abnormal. The persecutors are "unreal"; that is, there are no things which act as persecutors act; but the hallucination exists. Given its conditions it is as natural as any other event, and poses only the same kind of problem as is put by the occurrence of, say, a thunderstorm.

The "unreality" of persecution is not, however, a subjective matter; it means that conditions do not exist for producing the *future* consequences which are now anticipated and reacted to. Ability to anticipate future consequences and to respond to them as stimuli to present behavior may well *define* what is meant by a mind or by "consciousness." But this is only a way of saying just what kind of a real or natural existence the subject is; it is not to fall back on a preconception about an unnatural subject in order to characterize the occurrence of error.

Although the discussion may be already labored, let us take another example — the occurrence of disease. By definition it is pathological, abnormal. At one time in human history this abnormality was taken to be something dwelling in the intrinsic nature of the event — in its existence irrespective of future consequences. Disease was literally extra-natural and to be referred to demons or to magic. No one today questions its naturalness — its place in the order of natural events. Yet it is abnormal — for it operates to effect results different from those which follow from health. The difference is a genuine empirical difference, not a mere mental distinction. From the standpoint of bearing on a subsequent course of events disease is unnatural, in spite of the naturalness of its occurrence and origin.

The habit of ignoring reference to the future is responsible for the assumption that to admit human participation in any form is to admit the "subjective" in a sense which alters the objective into the phenomenal. There have been those who, like Spinoza, regarded health and disease, good and ill, as equally real and equally unreal. However, only a few consistent materialists have included truth along with error as merely phenomenal and subjective. But if one does not regard movement toward possible consequences as genuine, wholesale denial of existential validity to all these distinctions is the only logical course. To select truth as objective and error as "subjective" is, on this basis, an unjustifiably partial procedure. Take everything as fixedly given, and both truth and error are arbitrary insertions into fact.

Admit the genuineness of changes going on, and capacity for its direction through organic action based on foresight, and both truth and falsity are alike existential. It is human to regard the course of events which is in line with our own efforts as the *regular* course of events, and interruptions as abnormal, but this partiality of human desire is itself a part of what actually takes place. ✓

It is now proposed to take a particular case of the alleged epistemological predicament for discussion, since the entire ground cannot be covered. I think, however, the instance chosen is typical, so that the conclusion reached may be generalized.

The instance is that of so-called relativity, in perception. There are almost endless instances; the stick bent in water; the whistle changing pitch with change of distance from the ear; objects doubled when the eye is pushed; the destroyed star still visible, etc., etc. For our consideration we may take the case of a spherical object that presents itself to one observer as a flat circle, to another as a somewhat distorted elliptical surface. This situation gives empirical proof, so it is argued, of the difference between a real object and mere appearance. Since there is but one object, the existence of two *subjects* is the sole differentiating factor. Hence the two appearances of the one real object is proof of the intervening distorting action of the subject. And many of the Neo-realists who deny the difference in question, admit the case to be one of knowledge and accordingly to constitute an epistemological problem. They have in consequence developed wonderfully elaborate schemes of sundry kinds to maintain "epistemological monism" intact.

Let us try to keep close to empirical facts. In the first place the two unlike appearances of the one sphere are physically necessary because of the laws of reaction of light. If the one sphere did *not* assume these two appearances under given conditions, we should be confronted with a hopelessly irreconcilable discrepancy in the behavior of natural energy. That the result is natural is evidenced by the fact that two cameras — or other arrangements of apparatus for reflecting light — yield precisely the same results.



Photographs are as genuinely physical existences as the original sphere; and they exhibit the two geometrical forms.

The statement of these facts makes no impression upon the confirmed epistemologist; he merely retorts that as long as it is admitted that the organism is the cause of a sphere being seen, from different points, as a circular and as an elliptical surface, the essence of his contention — the modification of the real object by the subject — is admitted. To the question why the same logic does not apply to photographic records he makes, as far as I know, no reply at all.

The source of the difficulty is not hard to see. The objection assumes that the alleged modifications of *the* real object are cases of *knowing* and hence attributable to the influence of a *knower*. Statements which set forth the doctrine will always be found to refer to the organic factor, to the eye, as an observer or a percipient. Even when reference is made to a lens or a mirror, language is sometimes used which suggests that the writer's naïveté is sufficiently gross to treat these physical factors as if they were engaged in perceiving the sphere. But as it is evident that the lens operates as a physical factor in correlation with other physical factors — notably light — so it ought to be evident that the intervention of the optical apparatus of the eye is a purely non-cognitive matter. The relation in question is not one between a sphere and a would-be knower of it, unfortunately condemned by the nature of the knowing apparatus to alter the thing he would know; it is an affair of the dynamic interaction of two physical agents in producing a third thing, an effect; — an affair of precisely the same kind as in any physical conjoint action, say the operation of hydrogen and oxygen in producing water. To regard the eye as primarily a knower, an observer, of things, is as crass as to assign that function to a camera. But unless the eye (or optical apparatus, or brain, or organism) be so regarded, there is absolutely no problem of observation or of knowledge in the case of the occurrence of elliptical and circular surfaces. Knowledge does not enter into the affair at all till *after* these forms of refracted

light have been produced. About them there is nothing unreal. Light is really, physically, existentially, refracted into these forms. If the same spherical form upon refracting light to physical objects in two quite different positions produced the same geometric forms, there would, indeed, be something to marvel at — as there would be if wax produced the same results in contact simultaneously with a cold body and with a warm one. Why talk about *the real* object in relation to a *knower* when what is given is one real thing in dynamic connection with another real thing?

The way of dealing with the case will probably meet with a retort; at least, it has done so before. It has been said that the account given above and the account of traditional subjectivism differ only verbally. The essential thing in both, so it is said, is the admission that an activity of a self or subject or organism makes a difference in the real object. Whether the subject makes this difference in the very process of knowing or makes it prior to the act of knowing is a minor matter; what is important is that the known thing has, by the time it is known, been "subjectified."

The objection gives a convenient occasion for summarizing the main points of the argument. On the one hand, the retort of the objector depends upon talking about *the* real object. Employ the term "*a* real object," and the change produced by the activity characteristic of the optical apparatus is of just the same kind as that of the camera lens or that of any other physical agency. Every event in the world marks a difference made to one existence in active conjunction with some other existence. And, as for the alleged subjectivity, if subjective is used merely as an adjective to designate the specific activity of a particular existence, comparable, say, to the term feral, applied to tiger, or metallic, applied to iron, then of course reference to subjective is legitimate. But it is also tautological. It is like saying that flesh eaters are carnivorous. But the term "subjective" is so consecrated to other uses, usually implying invidious contrast with objectivity (while subjective in the sense just suggested



means specific mode of objectivity), that it is difficult to maintain this innocent sense. Its use in any disparaging way in the situation before us — any sense implicating contrast with a real object — assumes that the organism *ought* not to make any difference when it operates in conjunction with other things. Thus we run to earth that assumption that the subject is heterogeneous from every other natural existence; it is to be the one otiose, inoperative thing in a moving world — our old assumption of the self as outside of things.

What and where is knowledge in the case we have been considering? Not, as we have already seen, in the production of forms of light having a circular and elliptical surface. These forms are natural happenings. They may enter into knowledge or they may not, according to circumstances. Countless such refractive changes take place without being noted. When they become subject-matter for knowledge, the inquiry they set on foot may take on an indefinite variety of forms. One may be interested in ascertaining more about the structural peculiarities of the forms themselves; one may be interested in the mechanism of their production; one may find problems in projective geometry, or in drawing and painting — all depending upon the specific matter-of-fact context. The forms may be *objectives* of knowledge — of reflective examination — or they may be means of knowing something else. It may happen — under some circumstances it does happen — that the objective of inquiry is the nature of the geometric form which, when refracting light, gives rise to these other forms. In this case the sphere is the thing known, and in this case the forms of light are signs or evidence of the conclusion to be drawn. There is no more reason for supposing that they *are* (mis)knowledges of the sphere — that the sphere is necessarily and from the start what one is trying to know — than for supposing that the position of the mercury in the thermometer tube is a cognitive distortion of atmospheric pressure. In each case (that of the mercury, and that of, say, a circular surface) the primary datum is a physical happening. In each case it may be used, upon occasion, as a sign or evidence of the nature of the

causes which brought it about. Given the position in question, the circular form would be an intrinsically *unreliable* evidence of the nature and position of the spherical body only in case it, as the direct datum of perception, were *not* what it is — a circular form.

I confess that all this seems so obvious that the reader is entitled to inquire into the motive for reciting such plain facts. Were it not for the persistence of the epistemological problem it would be an affront to the reader's intelligence to dwell upon them. But as long as such facts as we have been discussing furnish the subject-matter with which philosophizing is peculiarly concerned, these commonplaces must be urged and reiterated. They bear out two contentions which are important at the juncture, although they will lose special significance as soon as these are habitually recognized: Negatively, a prior and non-empirical notion of the self is the source of the prevailing belief that experience as such is primarily cognitional — a knowledge affair; positively, *knowledge is always a matter of the use that is made of experienced natural events*, a use in which given things are treated as indications of what will be experienced under different conditions.

Let us make one effort more to clear up these points. Suppose it is a question of knowledge of water. The thing to be known does not present itself primarily as a matter of knowledge-and-ignorance at all. It occurs as a stimulus to action and as the source of certain undergoings. It is something to react to: to drink, to wash with, to put out fire with, and also something that reacts unexpectedly to our reactions, that makes us undergo disease, suffocation, drowning. In this twofold way, water or anything else enters into experience. Such presence in experience has of itself nothing to do with knowledge or consciousness; nothing that is in the sense of depending upon them, though it has everything to do with knowledge and consciousness in the sense that the latter depends upon prior experience of this non-cognitive sort. Man's experience is what it is because his response to things (even successful response) and the reactions of things to his life are so radically different

from knowledge. The difficulties and tragedies of life, the stimuli to acquiring knowledge, lie in the radical disparity of presence-in-experience and presence-in-knowing. Yet the immense importance of knowledge experience, the fact that turning presence-in-experience over into presence-in-a-knowledge-experience is the sole mode of control of nature, has systematically hypnotized European philosophy since the time of Socrates into thinking that all experiencing is a mode of knowing, if not good knowledge, then a low-grade or confused or implicit knowledge.

When water is an adequate stimulus to action or when its reactions oppress and overwhelm us, it remains outside the scope of knowledge. When, however, the bare presence of the thing (say, as optical stimulus) ceases to operate directly as stimulus to response and begins to operate in connection with a forecast of the consequences it will effect when responded to, it begins to acquire meaning — to be known, to be an object. It is noted as something which is wet, fluid, satisfies thirst, allays uneasiness, etc. The conception that we begin with a known visual quality which is thereafter enlarged by adding on qualities apprehended by the other senses does not rest upon experience; it rests upon making experience conform to the notion that every experience *must* be a cognitive noting. As long as the visual stimulus operates as a stimulus on its own account, there is no apprehension, no noting, of color or light at all. To much the greater portion of sensory stimuli we react in precisely this wholly non-cognitive way. In the attitude of suspended response in which consequences are anticipated, the direct stimulus becomes a sign or index of something else — and thus matter of noting or apprehension or acquaintance, or whatever term may be employed. This difference (together, of course, with the consequences which go with it) is the difference which the natural event of knowing makes to the natural event of direct organic stimulation. It is no change of a reality into an unreality, of an object into something subjective; it is no secret, illicit, or epistemological transformation; it is a genuine acquisition of new and distinctive features

through entering into relations with things with which it was not formerly connected — namely, possible and future things.

But, replies someone so obsessed with the epistemological point of view that he assumes that the prior account is a rival epistemology in disguise, all this involves no change in Reality, no difference made to Reality. Water was all the time all the things it is ever found out to be. Its real nature has not been altered by knowing it; any such alteration means a misknowing.

In reply let it be said — once more and finally — there is no assertion or implication about *the* real object or *the* real world or *the* reality. Such an assumption goes with that epistemological universe of discourse which has to be abandoned in an empirical universe of discourse. The change is of *a* real object. An incident of the world operating as a physiologically direct stimulus is assuredly a reality. Responded to, it produces specific consequences in virtue of the response. Water is not drunk unless somebody drinks it; it does not quench thirst unless a thirsty person drinks it — and so on. Consequences occur whether one is aware of them or not; they are integral facts in experience. But let one of these consequences be anticipated and let it, as anticipated, become an indispensable element in the stimulus, and then there is a known object. It is not that knowing *produces* a change, but that it *is* a change of the specific kind described. A serial process, the successive portions of which are as such incapable of simultaneous occurrence, is telescoped and condensed into an object, a unified inter-reference of contemporaneous properties, most of which express potentialities rather than completed data.

Because of this change, an *object* possesses truth or error (which the physical occurrence as such never has); it is classifiable as fact or fantasy; it is of a sort or kind, expresses an essence or nature, possesses implications, etc., etc. That is to say, it is marked by *specifiable logical* traits not found in physical occurrences as such. Because objective idealisms have seized upon these traits as constituting the very essence of Reality is no reason for proclaiming that they are ready-made fea-

tures of physical happenings, and hence for maintaining that knowing is nothing but an appearance of things on a stage for which "consciousness" supplies the footlights. For only the epistemological predicament leads to "presentations" being regarded as cognitions of things which were previously un-presented. In any empirical situation of everyday life or of science, knowledge signifies something stated or inferred of another thing. Visible water is not a more or less erroneous presentation of  $H_2O$ , but  $H_2O$  is a knowledge about the thing we see, drink, wash with, sail on, and use for power.

A further point and the present phase of discussion terminates. Treating knowledge as a representative relation between the knower and object makes it necessary to regard the mechanism of *presentation* as constituting the act of knowing. Since things may be presented in sense-perception, in recollection, in imagination and in conception, and since the mechanism in every one of these four styles of presentation is sensory-cerebral the problem of knowing becomes a mind-body problem. The psychological, or physiological, mechanism of presentation involved in seeing a chair, remembering what I ate yesterday for luncheon, imagining the moon the size of a cart wheel, conceiving a mathematical continuum, is identified with the operation of knowing. The evil consequences are twofold. The problem of the relation of mind and body has become a part of the problem of the possibility of knowledge in general, to the further complication of a matter already hopelessly constrained. Meantime the actual process of knowing, namely, operations of controlled observation, inference, reasoning, and testing, the only process with *intellectual* import, is dismissed as irrelevant to the theory of knowing. The methods of knowing practiced in daily life and science are excluded from consideration in the philosophical theory of knowing. Hence the constructions of the latter become more and more elaborately artificial because there is no definite check upon them. It would be easy to quote from epistemological writers statements to the effect that these processes (which supply the only empirically

verifiable facts of knowing) are *merely* inductive in character, or even that they are of purely psychological significance. It would be difficult to find a more complete inversion of the facts than in the latter statement, since presentation constitutes in fact the psychological affair. A confusion of logic with physiological psychology has bred hybrid epistemology, with the amazing result that the technique of effective inquiry is rendered irrelevant to the theory of knowing, and those physical events involved in the occurrence of data for knowing are treated as if they constituted the act of knowing.

#### V

What are the bearings of our discussion upon the conception of the present scope and office of philosophy? What do our conclusions indicate and demand with reference to philosophy itself? For the philosophy which reaches such conclusions regarding knowledge and mind must apply them, sincerely and whole-heartedly, to its idea of its own nature. For philosophy claims to be one form or mode of knowing. If, then, the conclusion is reached that knowing is a way of employing empirical occurrences with respect to increasing power to direct the consequences which flow from things, the application of the conclusion must be made to philosophy itself. It, too, becomes not a contemplative survey of existence nor an analysis of what is past and done with, but an outlook upon future possibilities with reference to attaining the better and averting the worse. Philosophy must take, with good grace, its own medicine.

It is easier to state the negative results of the changed idea of philosophy than the positive ones. The point that occurs to mind most readily is that philosophy will have to surrender all pretension to be peculiarly concerned with ultimate reality, or with reality as a complete (i.e., completed) whole: with *the* real object.

More than once, this essay has intimated that the counterpart of the idea of invidiously real reality is the spectator notion of knowledge. If the knower, however defined, is set

over against the world to be known, knowing consists in possessing a transcript, more or less accurate but otiose, of real things. Whether this transcript is presentative in character (as realists say) or whether it is by means of states of consciousness which represent things (as subjectivists say), is a matter of great importance in its own context. But in another regard, this difference is negligible in comparison with the point in which both agree. Knowing is viewing from outside. But if it be true that the self or subject of experience is part and parcel of the course of events, it follows that the self *becomes* a knower. It becomes a mind in virtue of a distinctive way of partaking in the course of events. The significant distinction is no longer between the knower *and* the world; it is between different ways of being in and of the movement of things; between a brute physical way and a purposive, intelligent way.

## VI

As a matter of fact, the pragmatic theory of intelligence means that the function of mind is to project new and more complex ends — to free experience from routine and from caprice. Not the use of thought to accomplish purposes already given either in the mechanism of the body or in that of the existent state of society, but the use of intelligence to liberate and liberalize action, is the pragmatic lesson. Action restricted to given and fixed ends may attain great technical efficiency; but efficiency is the only quality to which it can lay claim. Such action is mechanical (or becomes so), no matter what the scope of the preformed end, be it the Will of God or *Kulture*. But the doctrine that intelligence develops within the sphere of action for the sake of possibilities not yet given is the oppsite of a doctrine of mechanical efficiency. Intelligence *as* intelligence is inherently forward-looking; only by ignoring its primary function does it become a mere means for an end already given. The latter *is* servile, even when the end is labeled moral, religious, or esthetic. But action directed to ends to which the agent has not previously

been attached inevitably carries with it a quickened and enlarged spirit. A pragmatic intelligence is a creative intelligence, not a routine mechanic.

All this may read like a defense of pragmatism by one concerned to make out for it the best case possible. Such is not, however, the intention. The purpose is to indicate the extent to which intelligence frees action from a mechanically instrumental character. Intelligence is, indeed, instrumental *through* action to the determination of the qualities of future experience. But the very fact that the concern of intelligence is with the future, with the as-yet-unrealized (and with the given and the established only as conditions of the realization of possibilities), makes the action in which it takes effect generous and liberal; free of spirit. Just that action which extends and approves intelligence has an intrinsic value of its own in being instrumental: — the intrinsic value of being informed with intelligence in behalf of the enrichment of life. By the same stroke, intelligence becomes truly liberal: knowing is a human undertaking, not an esthetic appreciation carried on by a refined class or a capitalistic possession of a few learned specialists, whether men of science or of philosophy.

More emphasis has been put upon what philosophy is not than upon what it may become. But it is not necessary, it is not even desirable, to set forth philosophy as a scheduled program. There are human difficulties of an urgent, deep-seated kind which may be clarified by trained reflection, and whose solution may be forwarded by the careful development of hypotheses. When it is understood that philosophic thinking is caught up in the actual course of events, having the office of guiding them toward a prosperous issue, problems will abundantly present themselves. Philosophy will not solve these problems; philosophy is vision, imagination, reflection — and these functions, apart from action, modify nothing and hence resolve nothing. But in a complicated and perverse world, action which is not informed with vision, imagination, and reflection is more likely to increase confusion and conflict than to straighten things out. It is not easy

for generous and sustained reflection to become a guiding and illuminating method in action. Until it frees itself from identification with problems which are supposed to depend upon Reality as such, or its distinction from a world of Appearance, or its relation to a Knower as such, the hands of philosophy are tied. Having no chance to link its fortunes with a responsible career by suggesting things to be tried, it cannot identify itself with questions which actually arise in the vicissitudes of life. Philosophy recovers itself when it ceases to be a device for dealing with the problems of philosophers, and becomes a method, cultivated by philosophers, for dealing with the problems of men.

Emphasis must vary with the stress and special impact of the troubles which perplex men. Each age knows its own ills, and seeks its own remedies. One does not have to forecast a particular program to note that the central need of any program at the present day is an adequate conception of the nature of intelligence and its place in action. Philosophy cannot disavow responsibility for many misconceptions of the nature of intelligence which now hamper its efficacious operation. It has at least a negative task imposed upon it. It must take away the burdens which it has laid upon the intelligence of the common man in struggling with his difficulties. It must deny and eject that intelligence which is naught but a distant eye, registering in a remote and alien medium the spectacle of nature and life. To enforce the fact that the emergence of imagination and thought is relative to the connection of the sufferings of men with their doings is of itself to illuminate those sufferings and to instruct those doings. To catch mind in its connection with the entrance of the novel into the course of the world is to be on the road to see that intelligence is itself the most promising of all novelties, the revelation of the meaning of that transformation of past into future which is the reality of every present. To reveal intelligence as the organ for the guidance of this transformation, the sole director of its quality, is to make a declaration of present untold significance for action. To elaborate these convictions of the con-

nection of intelligence with what men undergo because of their doings and with the emergence and direction of the creative, the novel, in the world is of itself a program which will keep philosophers busy until something more worth while is forced upon them. For the elaboration has to be made through application to all the disciplines which have an intimate connection with human conduct: to logic, ethics, esthetics, economics, and the procedure of the sciences formal and natural.

I also believe that there is a genuine sense in which the enforcement of the pivotal position of intelligence in the world and thereby in control of human fortunes (so far as they are manageable) is the peculiar problem in the problems of life which come home most closely to ourselves — to ourselves living not merely in the early twentieth century but in the United States. It is easy to be foolish about the connection of thought with national life. But I do not see how anyone can question the distinctively national color of English, or French, or German philosophies. And if of late the history of thought has come under the domination of the German dogma of an inner evolution of ideas, it requires but a little inquiry to convince oneself that that dogma itself testifies to a particularly nationalistic need and origin. I believe that philosophy in America will be lost between chewing a historic cud long since reduced to woody fiber, or an apologetics for lost causes (lost to natural science), or a scholastic, schematic formalism, unless it can somehow bring to consciousness America's own needs and its own implicit principle of successful action.

This need and principle, I am convinced, is the necessity of a deliberate control of policies by the method of intelligence, an intelligence which is not the faculty of intellect honored in textbooks and neglected elsewhere, which is the sum-total of impulses, habits, emotions, records, and discoveries which forecast what is desirable and undesirable in future possibilities, and which contrive ingeniously in behalf of imagined good. Our life has no background of sanctified categories upon which we may fall back; we rely

upon precedent as authority only to our own undoing — for with us there is such a continuously novel situation that final reliance upon precedent entails some class interest guiding us by the nose whither it will. British empiricism, with its appeal to what has been in the past, is, after all, only a kind of *a priorism*. For it lays down a fixed rule for future intelligence to follow; and only the immersion of philosophy in technical learning prevents our seeing that this is the essence of *a priorism*.

We pride ourselves upon being realistic, desiring a hard-headed cognizance of facts, and devoted to mastering the means of life. We pride ourselves upon a practical idealism, a lively and easily moved faith in possibilities as yet unrealized, in willingness to make sacrifice for their realization. Idealism easily

becomes a sanction of waste and carelessness, and realism a sanction of legal formalism in behalf of things as they are — the rights of the possessor. We thus tend to combine a loose and ineffective optimism with assent to the doctrine of take who take can: a deification of power. All peoples at all times have been narrowly realistic in practice and have then employed idealization to cover up in sentiment and theory their brutalities. But never, perhaps, has the tendency been so dangerous and so tempting as with ourselves. Faith in the power of intelligence to imagine a future which is the projection of the desirable in the present, and to invent the instrumentalities of its realization is our salvation. And it is a faith which must be nurtured and made articulate: surely a sufficiently large task for our philosophy.

## INTRODUCTION TO HUMAN NATURE AND CONDUCT<sup>1</sup>

"GIVE a dog a bad name and hang him." Human nature has been the dog of professional moralists, and consequences accord with the proverb. Man's nature has been regarded with suspicion, with fear, with sour looks, sometimes with enthusiasm for its possibilities but only when these were placed in contrast with its actualities. It has appeared to be so evilly disposed that the business of morality was to prune and curb it, it would be thought better of if it could be replaced by something else. It has been supposed that morality would be quite superfluous were it not for the inherent weakness, bordering on depravity, of human nature. Some writers with a more genial conception have attributed the current blackening to theologians who have thought to honor the divine by disparaging the human. Theologians have doubtless taken a gloomier view of man than have pagans and secularists. But this explanation doesn't take us far. For

after all these theologians are themselves human, and they would have been without influence if the human audience had not somehow responded to them.

Morality is largely concerned with controlling human nature. When we are attempting to control anything we are acutely aware of what resists us. So moralists were led, perhaps, to think of human nature as evil because of its reluctance to yield to control, its rebelliousness under the yoke. But this explanation only raises another question. Why did morality set up rules so foreign to human nature? The ends it insisted upon, the regulations it imposed, were after all outgrowths of human nature. Why then was human nature so averse to them? Moreover rules can be obeyed and ideals realized only as they appeal to something in human nature and awaken in it an active response. Moral principles that exalt themselves by degrading human nature are in effect committing

<sup>1</sup> *Human Nature and Conduct: An Introduction to Social Psychology*. New York: 1922. Reprinted with the permission of Henry Holt and Company.

suicide. Or else they involve human nature in unending civil war, and treat it as a hopeless mess of contradictory forces.

We are forced therefore to consider the nature and origin of that control of human nature with which morals has been occupied. And the fact which is forced upon us when we raise this question is the existence of classes. Control has been vested in an oligarchy. Indifference to regulation has grown in the gap which separates the ruled from the rulers. Parents, priests, chiefs, social censors have supplied aims, aims which were foreign to those upon whom they were imposed, to the young, laymen, ordinary folk; a few have given and administered rule, and the mass have in a passable fashion and with reluctance obeyed. Everybody knows that good children are those who make as little trouble as possible for their elders, and since most of them cause a good deal of annoyance they must be naughty by nature. Generally speaking, good people have been those who did what they were told to do, and lack of eager compliance is a sign of something wrong in their nature.

But no matter how much men in authority have turned moral rules into an agency of class supremacy, any theory which attributes the origin of rule to deliberate design is false. To take advantage of conditions after they have come into existence is one thing; to create them for the sake of an advantage to accrue is quite another thing. We must go back of the bare fact of social division into superior and inferior. } To say that accident produced social conditions is to perceive they were not produced by intelligence. Lack of understanding of human nature is the primary cause of disregard for it. Lack of insight always ends in despising or else unreasoned admiration. When men had no scientific knowledge of physical nature they either passively submitted to it or sought to control it magically. What cannot be understood cannot be managed intelligently. It has to be forced into subjection from without. The opaqueness of human nature to reason is equivalent to a belief in its intrinsic irregularity. Hence a decline in the authority of social oligarchy was accompanied by a rise of

scientific interest in human nature. This means that the make-up and working of human forces afford a basis for moral ideas and ideals. Our science of human nature in comparison with physical sciences is rudimentary, and morals which are concerned with the health, efficiency and happiness of a development of human nature are correspondingly elementary. These pages are a discussion of some phases of the ethical change involved in positive respect for human nature when the latter is associated with scientific knowledge. We may anticipate the general nature of this change through considering the evils which have resulted from severing morals from the actualities of human physiology and psychology. ¶ There is a pathology of goodness as well as of evil; that is, of that sort of goodness which is nurtured by this separation. ¶ The badness of good people, for the most part recorded only in fiction, is the revenge taken by human nature for the injuries heaped upon it in the name of morality. In the first place, morals cut off from positive roots in man's nature is bound to be mainly negative. Practical emphasis falls upon avoidance, escape of evil, upon not doing things, observing prohibitions. Negative morals assume as many forms as there are types of temperament subject to it. Its commonest form is the protective coloration of a neutral respectability, an insipidity of character. For one man who thanks God that he is not as other men there are a thousand to offer thanks that they are as other men, sufficiently as others are to escape attention. Absence of social blame is the usual mark of goodness for it shows that evil has been avoided. Blame is most readily averted by being so much like everybody else that one passes unnoticed. Conventional morality is a drab morality, in which the only fatal thing is to be conspicuous. If there be flavor left in it, then some natural traits have somehow escaped being subdued. To be so good as to attract notice is to be priggish, too good for this world. The same psychology that brands the convicted criminal as forever a social outcast makes it the part of a gentleman not to obtrude virtues noticeably upon others.



The Puritan is never popular, not even in a society of Puritans. In case of a pinch, the mass prefer to be good fellows rather than to be good men. Polite vice is preferable to eccentricity and ceases to be vice. Morals that professedly neglect human nature end by emphasizing those qualities of human nature that are most commonplace and average; they exaggerate the herd instinct to conformity. Professional guardians of morality who have been exacting with respect to themselves have accepted avoidance of conspicuous evil as enough for the masses. One of the most instructive things in all human history is the system of concessions, tolerances, mitigations and reprieves which the Catholic Church with its official supernatural morality has devised for the multitude. Elevation of the spirit above everything natural is tempered by organized leniency for the frailties of flesh. To uphold an aloof realm of strictly ideal realities is admitted to be possible only for a few. Protestantism, except in its most zealous forms, has accomplished the same result by a sharp separation between religion and morality in which a higher justification by faith disposes at one stroke of daily lapses into the gregarious morals of average conduct.

There are always ruder forceful natures who cannot tame themselves to the required level of colorless conformity. To them conventional morality appears as an organized futility; though they are usually unconscious of their own attitude since they are heartily in favor of morality for the mass as making it easier to manage them. Their only standard is success, putting things over, getting things done. Being good is to them practically synonymous with ineffectuality; and accomplishment, achievement is its own justification. They know by experience that much is forgiven to those who succeed, and they leave goodness to the stupid, to those whom they qualify as boobs. Their gregarious nature finds sufficient outlet in the conspicuous tribute they pay to all established institutions as guardians of ideal interests, and in their denunciations of all who openly defy conventionalized ideals. Or they discover that they are the chosen agents of a higher morality and walk subject to specially ordained

laws. Hypocrisy in the sense of a deliberate covering up of a will to evil by loud-voiced protestations of virtue is one of the rarest of occurrences. But the combination in the same person of an intensely executive nature with a love of popular approval is bound, in the face of conventional morality, to produce what the critical term hypocrisy.

Another reaction to the separation of morals from human nature is a romantic glorification of natural impulse as something superior to all moral claims. There are those who lack the persistent force of the executive will to break through conventions and to use them for their own purposes, but who unite sensitiveness with intensity of desire. Fastening upon the conventional element in morality, they hold that all morality is a conventionality hampering to the development of individuality. Although appetites are the commonest things in human nature, the least distinctive or individualized, they identify unrestraint in satisfaction of appetite with free realization of individuality. They treat subjection to passion as a manifestation of freedom in the degree in which it shocks the bourgeois. The urgent need for a transvaluation of morals is caricatured by the notion that an avoidance of the avoidances of conventional morals constitutes positive achievement. While the executive type keeps its eyes on actual conditions so as to manipulate them, this school abrogates objective intelligence in behalf of sentiment, and withdraws into little coteries of emancipated souls.

There are others who take seriously the idea of morals separated from the ordinary actualities of humanity and who attempt to live up to it. Some become engrossed in spiritual egotism. They are preoccupied with the state of their character, concerned for the purity of their motives and the goodness of their souls. The exaltation of conceit which sometimes accompanies this absorption can produce a corrosive inhumanity which exceeds the possibilities of any other known form of selfishness. In other cases, persistent preoccupation with the thought of an ideal realm breeds morbid discontent with surroundings, or induces a futile with-



drawal into an inner world where all facts are fair to the eye. The needs of actual conditions are neglected, or dealt with in a half-hearted way, because in the light of the ideal they are so mean and sordid. To speak of evils, to strive seriously for change, shows a low mind. Or, again, the ideal becomes a refuge, an asylum, a way of escape from tiresome responsibilities. In varied ways men come to live in two worlds, one the actual, the other the ideal. Some are tortured by the sense of their irreconcilability. Others alternate between the two, compensating for the strains of renunciation involved in membership in the ideal realm by pleasureable excursions into the delights of the actual.

If we turn from concrete effects upon character to theoretical issues, we single out the discussion regarding freedom of will as typical of the consequences that come from separating morals from human nature. Men are wearied with bootless discussion, and anxious to dismiss it as a metaphysical subtlety. But nevertheless it contains within itself the most practical of all moral questions, the nature of freedom and the means of its achieving. The separation of morals from human nature leads to a separation of human nature in its moral aspects from the rest of nature, and from ordinary social habits and endeavors which are found in business, civic life, the run of companionships and recreations. These things are thought of at most as places where moral notions need to be applied, not as places where moral ideas are to be studied and moral energies generated. In short, the severance of morals from human nature ends by driving morals inwards from the public open out-of-doors air and light of day into the obscurities and privacies of an inner life. The significance of the traditional discussion of free will is that it reflects precisely a separation of moral activity from nature and the public life of men.

One has to turn from moral theories to the general human struggle for political, economic and religious liberty, for freedom of thought, speech, assemblage and creed, to find significant reality in the conception of freedom of will. Then one finds himself out of the stiflingly close atmosphere of an inner

consciousness and in the open-air world. The cost of confining moral freedom to an inner region is the almost complete severance of ethics from politics and economics. The former is regarded as summed up in edifying exhortations, and the latter as connected with arts of expediency separated from larger issues of good.

In short, there are two schools of social reform. One bases itself upon the notion of a morality which springs from an inner freedom, something mysteriously cooped up within personality. It asserts that the only way to change institutions is for men to purify their own hearts, and that when this has been accomplished, change of institutions will follow of itself. The other school denies the existence of any such inner power, and in so doing conceives that it has denied all moral freedom. It says that men are made what they are by the forces of the environment, that human nature is purely malleable, and that till institutions are changed, nothing can be done. Clearly this leaves the outcome as hopeless as does an appeal to an inner rectitude and benevolence. For it provides no leverage for change of environment. It throws us back upon accident, usually disguised as a necessary law of history or evolution, and trusts to some violent change, symbolized by civil war, to usher in an abrupt millennium. There is an alternative to being penned in between these two theories. We can recognize that all conduct is *interaction* between elements of human nature and the environment, natural and social. Then we shall see that progress proceeds in two ways, and that freedom is found in that kind of interaction which maintains an environment in which human desire and choice count for something. There are in truth forces in man as well as without him. While they are infinitely frail in comparison with exterior forces, yet they may have the support of a fore-seeing and contriving intelligence. When we look at the problem as one of an adjustment to be intelligently attained, the issue shifts from within personality to an engineering issue, the establishment of arts of education and social guidance.

The idea persists that there is something

materialistic about natural science and that morals are degraded by having anything seriously to do with material things. If a sect should arise proclaiming that men ought to purify their lungs completely before they ever drew a breath it ought to win many adherents from professed moralists. For the neglect of sciences that deal specifically with facts of the natural and social environment leads to a side-tracking of moral forces into an unreal privacy of an unreal self. It is impossible to say how much of the remediable suffering of the world is due to the fact that physical science is looked upon as merely physical. It is impossible to say how much of the unnecessary slavery of the world is due to the conception that moral issues can be settled within conscience or human sentiment apart from consistent study of facts and application of specific knowledge in industry, law and politics. Outside of manufacturing and transportation, science gets its chance in war. These facts perpetuate war and the hardest, most brutal side of modern industry. Each sign of disregard for the moral potentialities of physical science drafts the conscience of mankind away from concern with the interactions of man and nature which must be mastered if freedom is to be a reality. It diverts intelligence to anxious preoccupation with the unrealities of a purely inner life, or strengthens reliance upon outbursts of sentimental affection. The masses swarm to the occult for assistance. The cultivated smile contemptuously. They might smile, as the saying goes, out of the other side of their mouths if they realized how recourse to the occult exhibits the practical logic of their own beliefs. For both rest upon a separation of moral ideas and feelings from knowable facts of life, man and the world.

It is not pretended that a moral theory based upon realities of human nature and a study of the specific connections of these realities with those of physical science would do away with moral struggle and defeat. It would not make the moral life as simple a matter as wending one's way along a well-lighted boulevard. All action is an invasion of the future, of the unknown. Conflict and

uncertainty are ultimate traits. But morals based upon concern with facts and deriving guidance from knowledge of them would at least locate the points of effective endeavor and would focus available resources upon them. It would put an end to the impossible attempt to live in two unrelated worlds. It would destroy fixed distinction between the human and the physical, as well as that between the moral and the industrial and political. A morals based on study of human nature instead of upon disregard for it would find the facts of man continuous with those of the rest of nature and would thereby ally ethics with physics and biology. It would find the nature and activities of one person coterminous with those of other human beings, and therefore link ethics with the study of history, sociology, law and economics.

Such a morals would not automatically solve moral problems, nor resolve perplexities. But it would enable us to state problems in such forms that action could be courageously and intelligently directed to their solution. It would not assure us against failure, but it would render failure a source of instruction. It would not protect us against the future emergence of equally serious moral difficulties, but it would enable us to approach the always recurring troubles with a fund of growing knowledge which would add significant values to our conduct even when we overtly failed — as we should continue to do. Until the integrity of morals with human nature and of both with the environment is recognized, we shall be deprived of the aid of past experience to cope with the most acute and deep problems of life. Accurate and extensive knowledge will continue to operate only in dealing with purely technical problems. The intelligent acknowledgment of the continuity of nature, man and society will alone secure a growth of morals which will be serious without being fanatical, aspiring without sentimentality, adapted to reality without conventionality, sensible without taking the form of calculation of profits, idealistic without being romantic.

THE PLACE OF HABIT IN CONDUCT<sup>1</sup>

HABITS may be profitably compared to physiological functions, like breathing, digesting. The latter are, to be sure, involuntary, while habits are acquired. But important as is this difference for many purposes, it should not conceal the fact that habits are like functions in many respects, and especially in requiring the co-operation of organism and environment. Breathing is an affair of the air as truly as of the lungs, digesting an affair of food as truly as of tissues of stomach. Seeing involves light just as certainly as it does the eye and optic nerve. Walking implicates the ground as well as the legs; speech demands physical air and human companionship and audience as well as vocal organs. We may shift from the biological to the mathematical use of the word function, and say that natural operations like breathing and digesting, acquired ones like speech and honesty, are functions of the surroundings as truly as of a person. They are things done *by* the environment by means of organic structures or acquired dispositions. The same air that under certain conditions ruffles the pool or wrecks buildings, under other conditions purifies the blood and conveys thought. The outcome depends upon what air acts upon. The social environment acts through native impulses and speech and moral habitudes manifest themselves. There are specific good reasons for the usual attribution of acts to the person from whom they immediately proceed. But to convert this special reference into a belief of exclusive ownership is as misleading as to suppose that breathing and digesting are complete within the human body. To get a rational basis for moral discussion we must begin with recognizing that functions and habits are ways of using and incorporating the environment in which the latter has its say as surely as the former.

We may borrow words from a context less technical than that of biology, and convey

the same idea by saying that habits are arts. They involve skill of sensory and motor organs, cunning or craft, and objective materials. They assimilate objective energies, and eventuate in command of environment. They require order, discipline, and manifest technique. They have a beginning, middle, and end. Each stage marks progress in dealing with materials and tools, advance in converting material to active use. We should laugh at anyone who said that he was master of stone working, but that the art was cooped up within himself and in no wise dependent upon support from objects and assistance from tools.

In morals we are however quite accustomed to such a fatuity. Moral dispositions are thought of as belonging exclusively to a self. The self is thereby isolated from natural and social surroundings. A whole school of morals flourishes upon capital drawn from restricting morals to character and then separating character from conduct, motives from actual deeds. Recognition of the analogy of moral action with functions and arts uproots the causes which have made morals subjective and "individualistic." It brings morals to earth, and if they still aspire to heaven it is to the heavens *of* the earth, and not to another world. Honesty, chastity, malice, peevishness, courage, triviality, industry, irresponsibility are not private possessions of a person. They are working adaptations of personal capacities with environing forces. All virtues and vices are habits which incorporate objective forces. They are interactions of elements contributed by the make-up of an individual with elements supplied by the out-door world. They can be studied as objectively as physiological functions, and they can be modified by change of either personal or social elements.

If an individual were alone in the world, he would form his habits (assuming the impos-

<sup>1</sup> *Human Nature and Conduct: An Introduction to Social Psychology*, part 1, section 1. New York, 1922. Reprinted with the permission of Henry Holt and Company.

sible, namely, that he would be able to form them) in a moral vacuum. They would belong to him alone, or to him only in reference to physical forces. Responsibility and virtue would be his alone. But since habits involve the support of environing conditions, a society or some specific group of fellow-men is always accessory before and after the fact. Some activity proceeds from a man; then it sets up reactions in the surroundings. Others approve, disapprove, protest, encourage, share, and resist. Even letting a man alone is a definite response. Envy, admiration, and imitation are complicities. Neutrality is non-existent. Conduct is always shared; this is the difference between it and a physiological process. It is not an ethical "ought" that conduct *should* be social. It *is* social, whether bad or good.

Washing one's hands of the guilt of others is a way of sharing guilt so far as it encourages in others a vicious way of action. Non-resistance to evil which takes the form of paying no attention to it is a way of promoting it. The desire of an individual to keep his own conscience stainless by standing aloof from badness may be a sure means of causing evil and thus of creating personal responsibility for it. Yet there are circumstances in which passive resistance may be the most effective form of nullification of wrong action, or in which heaping coals of fire on the evil-doer may be the most effective way of transforming conduct. To sentimentalize over a criminal — to "forgive" because of a glow of feeling — is to incur liability for production of criminals. But to suppose that infliction of retributive suffering suffices, without reference to concrete consequences, is to leave untouched old causes of criminality and to create new ones by fostering revenge and brutality. The abstract theory of justice which demands the "vindication" of law irrespective of instruction and reform of the wrong-doer is as much a refusal to recognize responsibility as is the sentimental gush which makes a suffering victim out of a criminal.

Courses of action which put the blame exclusively on a person as if his evil will were the sole cause of wrong-doing and those

which condone offense on account of the share of social conditions in producing bad disposition, are equally ways of making an unreal separation of man from his surroundings, mind from the world. Causes for an act always exist, but causes are not excuses. Questions of causation are physical, not moral except when they concern future consequences. It is as causes of future actions that excuses and accusations alike must be considered. At present we give way to resentful passion, and then "rationalize" our surrender by calling it a vindication of justice. Our entire tradition regarding punitive justice tends to prevent recognition of social partnership in producing crime, it falls in with a belief in metaphysical free-will. By killing an evil-doer or shutting him up behind stone walls, we are enabled to forget both him and our part in creating him. Society excuses itself by laying the blame on the criminal; he retorts by putting the blame on bad early surroundings, the temptations of others, lack of opportunities, and the persecutions of officers of the law. Both are right, except in the wholesale character of their recriminations. But the effect on both sides is to throw the whole matter back into antecedent causation, a method which refuses to bring the matter to truly moral judgment. For morals has to do with acts still within our control, acts still to be performed. No amount of guilt on the part of the evil-doer absolves us from responsibility for the consequences upon him and others of our way of treating him, or from our continuing responsibility for the conditions under which persons develop perverse habits.

We need to discriminate between the physical and the moral question. The former concerns what *has* happened, and how it happened. To consider this question is indispensable to morals. Without an answer to it we cannot tell what forces are at work nor how to direct our actions so as to improve conditions. Until we know the conditions which have helped form the characters we approve and disapprove, our efforts to create the one and do away with the other will be blind and halting. But the moral issue concerns the future. It is prospective. To

content ourselves with pronouncing judgments of merit and demerit without reference to the fact that our judgments are themselves facts which have consequences and that their value depends upon *their* consequences, is complacently to dodge the moral issue, perhaps even to indulge ourselves in pleasurable passion just as the person we condemn once indulged himself. The moral problem is that of modifying the factors which now influence future results. To change the working character or will of another we have to alter objective conditions which enter into his habits. Our own schemes of judgment, of assigning blame and praise, of awarding punishment and honor, are part of these conditions.

In practical life, there are many recognitions of the part played by social factors in generating personal traits. One of them is our habit of making social classifications. We attribute distinctive characteristics to rich and poor, slum-dweller and captain of industry, rustic and suburbanite, officials, politicians, professors, to members of races, sets and parties. These judgments are usually too coarse to be of much use. But they show our practical awareness that personal traits are functions of social situations. When we generalize this perception and act upon it intelligently we are committed by it to recognize that we change character from worse to better only by changing conditions — among which, once more, are our own ways of dealing with the one we judge. We cannot change habit directly: that notion is magic. But we can change it indirectly by modifying conditions, by an intelligent selecting and weighting of the objects which engage attention and which influence the fulfillment of desires.

A savage can travel after a fashion in a jungle. Civilized activity is too complex to be carried on without smoothed roads. It requires signals and junction points; traffic authorities and means of easy and rapid transportation. It demands a congenial, antecedently prepared environment. Without it, civilization would relapse into barbarism in spite of the best of subjective intention and internal good disposition. The eternal dig-

nity of labor and art lies in their effecting that permanent reshaping of environment which is the substantial foundation of future security and progress. Individuals flourish and wither away like the grass of the fields. But the fruits of their work endure and make possible the development of further activities having fuller significance. It is of grace not of ourselves that we lead civilized lives. There is sound sense in the old pagan notion that gratitude is the root of all virtue. Loyalty to whatever in the established environment makes a life of excellence possible is the beginning of all progress. The best we can accomplish for posterity is to transmit unimpaired and with some increment of meaning the environment that makes it possible to maintain the habits of decent and refined life. Our individual habits are links in forming the endless chain of humanity. Their significance depends upon the environment inherited from our forerunners, and it is enhanced as we foresee the fruits of our labors in the world in which our successors live.

For however much has been done, there always remains more to do. We can retain and transmit our own heritage only by constant remaking of our own environment. Piety to the past is not for its own sake nor for the sake of the past, but for the sake of a present so secure and enriched that it will create a yet better future. Individuals with their exhortations, their preachings and scoldings, their inner aspirations and sentiments have disappeared, but their habits endure, because these habits incorporate objective conditions in themselves. So will it be with *our* activities. We may desire abolition of war, industrial justice, greater equality of opportunity for all. But no amount of preaching good will or the golden rule or cultivation of sentiments of love and equity will accomplish the results. There must be change in objective arrangements and institutions. We must work on the environment not merely on the hearts of men. To think otherwise is to suppose that flowers can be raised in a desert or motor cars run in a jungle. Both things can happen and without a miracle. But only by first changing the jungle and desert.

Yet the distinctively personal or subjective factors in habit count. Taste for flowers may be the initial step in building reservoirs and irrigation canals. The stimulation of desire and effort is one preliminary in the change of surroundings. While personal exhortation, advice, and instruction is a feeble stimulus compared with that which steadily proceeds from the impersonal forces and depersonalized habitudes of the environment, yet they may start the latter going. Taste, appreciation, and effort always spring from some accomplished objective situation. They have objective support; they represent the liberation of something formerly accomplished so that it is useful in further operation.

A genuine appreciation of the beauty of flowers is not generated within a self-enclosed consciousness. It reflects a world in which beautiful flowers have already grown and been enjoyed. Taste and desire represent a prior objective fact recurring in action to secure perpetuation and extension. Desire for flowers comes after actual enjoyment of flowers. But it comes before the work that makes the desert blossom, it comes before *cultivation* of plants. Every ideal is preceded by an actuality; but the ideal is more than a repetition in inner image of the actual. It projects in securer and wider and fuller form some good which has been previously experienced in a precarious, accidental, fleeting way.

## WHAT IS FREEDOM?<sup>1</sup>

THE place of natural fact and law in morals brings us to the problem of freedom. We are told that seriously to import empirical facts into morals is equivalent to an abrogation of freedom. Facts and laws mean necessity we are told. The way to freedom is to turn our back upon them and take flight to a separate ideal realm. Even if the flight could be successfully accomplished, the efficacy of the prescription may be doubted. For we need freedom in and among actual events, not apart from them. It is to be hoped therefore that there remains an alternative; that the road to freedom may be found in that knowledge of facts which enables us to employ them in connection with desires and aims. A physician or engineer is free in his thought and his action in the degree in which he knows what he deals with. Possibly we find here the key to any freedom.

What men have esteemed and fought for in the name of liberty is varied and complex — but certainly it has never been a metaphysical freedom of will. It seems to contain three elements of importance, though on their face not all of them are directly compatible with one another. (i) It includes efficiency in action, ability to carry out plans, the absence

of cramping and thwarting obstacles. (ii) It also includes capacity to vary plans, to change the course of action, to experience novelties. And again (iii) it signifies the power of desire and choice to be factors in events.

Few men would purchase even a high amount of efficient action along definite lines at the price of monotony, or if success in action were bought by all abandonment of personal preference. They would probably feel that a more precious freedom was possessed in a life of ill-assured objective achievement that contained undertaking of risks, adventuring in new fields, a pitting of personal choice against the odds of events, and a mixture of success and failures, provided choice had a career. The slave is a man who executes the wish of others, one doomed to act along lines predetermined to regularity. Those who have defined freedom as ability to act have unconsciously assumed that this ability is exercised in accord with desire, and that its operation introduces the agent into fields previously unexplored. Hence the conception of freedom as involving three factors.

Yet efficiency in execution cannot be ig-

<sup>1</sup> *Human Nature and Conduct: An Introduction to Social Psychology*, part IV, section 3. New York, 1922. Reprinted with the permission of Henry Holt and Company.

nored. To say that a man is free to choose to walk while the only walk he can take will lead him over a precipice is to strain words as well as facts. Intelligence is the key to freedom in act. We are likely to be able to go ahead prosperously in the degree in which we have consulted conditions and formed a plan which enlists their consenting co-operation. The gratuitous help of unforeseen circumstance we cannot afford to despise. Luck, bad if not good, will always be with us. But it has a way of favoring the intelligent and showing its back to the stupid. And the gifts of fortune when they come are fleeting except when they are made taut by intelligent adaptation of conditions. In neutral and adverse circumstances, study and foresight are the only roads to unimpeded action. Insistence upon a metaphysical freedom of will is generally at its most strident pitch with those who despise knowledge of matters-of-fact. They pay for their contempt by halting and confined action. Glorification of freedom in general at the expense of positive abilities in particular has often characterized the official creed of historic liberalism. Its outward sign is the separation of politics and law from economics. Much of what is called the "individualism" of the early nineteenth century has in truth little to do with the nature of individuals. It goes back to a metaphysics which held that harmony between man and nature can be taken for granted, if once certain artificial restrictions upon man are removed. Hence it neglected the necessity of studying and regulating industrial conditions so that a nominal freedom can be made an actuality. Find a man who believes that all men need is freedom *from* oppressive legal and political measures, and you have found a man who, unless he is merely obstinately maintaining his own private privileges, carries at the back of his head some heritage of the metaphysical doctrine of free will, plus an optimistic confidence in natural harmony. He needs a philosophy that recognizes the objective character of freedom and its dependence upon a congruity of environment with human wants, an agreement which can be obtained only by profound thought and unremitting application.

For freedom as a fact depends upon conditions of work which are socially and scientifically buttressed. Since industry covers the most pervasive relations of man with his environment, freedom is unreal which does not have as its basis an economic command of environment.

I have no desire to add another to the cheap and easy solutions which exist of the seeming conflict between freedom and organization. It is reasonably obvious that organization may become a hindrance to freedom, it does not take us far to say that the trouble lies not in organization but in over-organization. At the same time, it must be admitted that there is no effective or objective freedom without organization. It is easy to criticize the contract theory of the state which states that individuals surrender some at least of their natural liberties in order to make secure as civil liberties what they retain. Nevertheless there is some truth in the idea of surrender and exchange. A certain natural freedom is possessed by man. That is to say, in some respects harmony exists between a man's energies and his surroundings such that the latter support and execute his purposes. In so far he is free; without such a basic natural support, conscious contrivances of legislation, administration, and deliberate human institution of social arrangements cannot take place. In this sense natural freedom is prior to political freedom and is its condition. But we cannot trust wholly to a freedom thus procured. It is at the mercy of accident. Conscious agreements among men must supplement and in some degree supplant freedom of action which is the gift of nature. In order to arrive at these agreements, individuals have to make concessions. They must consent to curtailment of some natural liberties in order that any of them may be rendered secure and enduring. They must, in short, enter into an organization with other human beings so that the activities of others may be permanently counted upon to assure regularity of action and far-reaching scope of plans and courses of action. The procedure is not, in so far, unlike surrendering a portion of one's income in order to buy insurance against future contingencies, and thus to



render the future course of life more equably secure. It would be folly to maintain that there is no sacrifice; we can however contend that the sacrifice is a reasonable one, justified by results.

Viewed in this light, the relation of individual freedom to organization is seen to be an experimental affair. It is not capable of being settled by abstract theory. Take the question of labor unions and the closed or open shop. It is folly to fancy that no restrictions and surrenders of prior freedoms and possibilities of future freedoms are involved in the extension of this particular form of organization. But to condemn such organization on the theoretical ground that a restriction of liberty is entailed is to adopt a position which would have been fatal to every advance step in civilization, and to every net gain in effective freedom. Every such question is to be judged not on the basis of antecedent theory but on the basis of concrete consequences. The question is to the balance of freedom and security achieved, as compared with practicable alternatives. Even the question of the point where membership in an organization ceases to be a voluntary matter and becomes coercive or required, is also an experimental matter, a thing to be decided by scientifically conducted study of consequences, of pros and cons. It is definitely an affair of specific detail, not of wholesale theory. It is equally amusing to see one man denouncing on grounds of pure theory the coercion of workers by a labor union while he avails himself of the increased power due to corporate action in business and praises the coercion of the political state; and to see another man denouncing the latter as pure tyranny, while lauding the power of industrial labor organizations. The position of one or the other may be justified in particular cases, but justification is due to results in practice not to general theory.

Organization tends, however, to become rigid and to limit freedom. In addition to security and energy in action, novelty, risk, change are ingredients of the freedom which men desire. Variety is more than the spice of life; it is largely of its essence, making a

difference between the free and the enslaved. Invariant virtue appears to be as mechanical as uninterrupted vice, for true excellence changes with conditions. Unless character rises to overcome some new difficulty or conquer some temptation from an unexpected quarter we suspect its grain is only a veneer. Choice is an element in freedom and there can be no choice without unrealized and precarious possibilities. It is this demand for genuine contingency which is caricatured in the orthodox doctrine of a freedom of indifference, a power to choose this way or that apart from any habit or impulse, without even a desire on the part of will to show off. Such an indetermination of choice is not desired by the lover of either reason or excitement. The theory of arbitrary free choice represents indeterminateness of conditions grasped in a vague and lazy fashion and hardened into a desirable attribute of will. Under the title of freedom men prize such uncertainty of conditions as give deliberation and choice an opportunity. But uncertainty of volition which is more than a reflection of uncertainty of conditions is the mark of a person who has acquired imbecility of character through permanent weakening of his springs of action.

Whether or not indeterminateness, uncertainty, actually exists in the world is a difficult question. It is easier to think of the world as fixed, settled once for all, and man as accumulating all the uncertainty there is in his will and all the doubt there is in his intellect. The rise of natural science has facilitated this dualistic partitioning, making nature wholly fixed and mind wholly open and empty. Fortunately for us, we do not have to settle the question. A hypothetical answer is enough. *If* the world is already done and done for, if its character is entirely achieved so that its behavior is like that of a man lost in routine, then the only freedom for which man can hope is one of efficiency in overt action. But *if* change is genuine, if accounts are still in process of making, and if objective uncertainty is the stimulus to reflection, then variation in action, novelty and experiment, have a true meaning. In any case the question is an objective one. It



concerns not man in isolation from the world but man in his connection with it. A world that is at points and times indeterminate enough to call out deliberation and to give play to choice to shape its future is a world in which will is free, not because it is inherently vacillating and unstable, but because deliberation and choice are determining and stabilizing factors.

Upon an empirical view, uncertainty, doubt, hesitation, contingency and novelty, genuine change which is not mere disguised repetition, are facts. Only deductive reasoning from certain fixed premises creates a bias in favor of complete determination and finality. To say that these things exist only in human experience, not in the world, and exist there only because of our "finitude" is dangerously like paying ourselves with words. Empirically the life of man seems in these respects as in others to express a culmination of facts in nature. To admit ignorance and uncertainty in man while denying them to nature involves a curious dualism. Variability, initiative, innovation, departure from routine, experimentation, are empirically the manifestation of a genuine *nisus* in things. At all events it is these things that are precious to us under the name of freedom. It is their elimination from the life of a slave which makes his life servile, intolerable to the freeman who has once been on his own, no matter what his animal comfort and security. A free man would rather take his chance in an open world than be guaranteed in a closed world.

These considerations give point to the third factor in love of freedom: the desire to have desire count as a factor, a force. Even if will chooses unaccountably, even if it be a capricious impulse, it does not follow that there are real alternatives, genuine possibilities, open in the future. What we want is possibilities open in the *world* not in the will, except as will or deliberate activity reflects the world. To foresee future objective alternatives and to be able by deliberation to choose one of them and thereby weight its chances in the struggle for future existence, measures our freedom. It is assumed sometimes that if it can be shown that deliberation

determines choice and deliberation is determined by character and conditions, there is no freedom. This is like saying that because a flower comes from root and stem it cannot bear fruit. The question is not what are the antecedents of deliberation and choice, but what are their consequences. What do they do that is distinctive? The answer is that they give us all the control of future possibilities which is open to us. And this control is the crux of our freedom. Without it, we are pushed from behind. With it, we walk in the light.

The doctrine that knowledge, intelligence rather than will, constitutes freedom is not new. It has been preached by moralists of many a school. All rationalists have identified freedom with action emancipated by insight into truth. But insight into necessity has by them been substituted for foresight of possibilities. Tolstoi, for example, expressed the idea of Spinoza and Hegel when he said that the ox is a slave as long as he refuses to recognize the yoke and chafes under it, while if he identifies himself with its necessity and draws willingly instead of rebelliously, he is free. But as long as the yoke is a yoke it is impossible that voluntary identification with it should occur. Conscious submission is then either fatalistic submissiveness or cowardice. The ox accepts in fact not the yoke but the stall and the hay to which the yoke is a necessary incident. But if the ox foresees the consequences of the use of the yoke, if he anticipates the possibility of harvest, and identifies himself not with the yoke but with the realization of its possibilities, he acts freely, voluntarily. He hasn't accepted a necessity as unavoidable; he has welcomed a possibility as a desirability.

Perception of necessary law plays, indeed, a part. But no amount of insight into necessity brings with it, as such, anything but a consciousness of necessity. Freedom is the "truth of necessity" only when we use one "necessity" to alter another. When we use the law to foresee consequences and to consider how they may be averted or secured, then freedom begins. Employing knowledge of law to enforce desire in execution gives power to the engineer. Employing knowl-

edge of law in order to submit to it without further action constitutes fatalism, no matter how it be dressed up. Thus we recur to our main contention. Morality depends upon events, not upon commands and ideals alien to nature. But intelligence treats events as moving, as fraught with possibilities, not as ended, final. In forecasting their possibilities, the distinction between better and worse

arises. Human desire and ability co-operate with this or that natural force according as this or that eventuality is judged better. We do not use the present to control the future. We use the foresight of the future to refine and expand present activity. In this use of desire, deliberation and choice, freedom is actualized.

## EXISTENCE AND VALUE<sup>1</sup>

MEN move between extremes. They conceive of themselves as gods, or feign a powerful and cunning god as an ally who bends the world to do their bidding and meet their wishes. Disillusionized, they disown the world that disappoints them; and hugging ideals to themselves as their own possession, stand in haughty aloofness apart from the hard course of events that pays so little heed to our hopes and aspirations. But a mind that has opened itself to experience and that has ripened through its discipline knows its own littleness and impotencies; it knows that its wishes and acknowledgments are not final measures of the universe, whether in knowledge or in conduct, and hence are, in the end, transient. But it also knows that its juvenile assumption of power and achievement is not a dream to be wholly forgotten. It implies a unity with the universe that is to be preserved. The belief, and the effort of thought and struggle which it inspires, are also the doing of the universe, and they in some way, however slight, carry the universe forward. A chastened sense of our importance, apprehension that it is not a yardstick by which to measure the whole, is consistent with the belief that we and our endeavors are significant not only for themselves but in the whole.

Fidelity to the nature to which we belong, as parts however weak, demands that we cherish our desires and ideals till we have converted them into intelligence, revised them in terms of the ways and means which

nature makes possible. When we have used our thought to its utmost and have thrown into the moving unbalanced balance of things our puny strength, we know that though the universe slay us still we may trust, for our lot is one with whatever is good in existence. We know that such thought and effort is one condition of the coming into existence of the better. As far as we are concerned it is the only condition, for it alone is in our power. To ask more than this is childish, but to ask less is a recreance no less egotistic, involving no less a cutting of ourselves from the universe than does the expectation that it meet and satisfy our every wish. To ask in good faith as much as this from ourselves is to stir into motion every capacity of imagination, and to exact from action every skill and bravery.

While, therefore, philosophy has its source not in any special impulse or staked-off section of experience, but in the entire human predicament, this human situation falls wholly within nature. It reflects the traits of nature; it gives indisputable evidence that in nature itself qualities and relations, individualities and uniformities, finalities and efficacies, contingencies and necessities are inextricably bound together. The harsh conflicts and the happy coincidences of this interpenetration make experience what it consciously is; their manifest apparition creates doubt, forces inquiry, exacts choice, and imposes liability for the choice which is made. Were there complete harmony in nature, life

<sup>1</sup> *Experience and Nature*, pp. 419-21. Chicago, 1929. Reprinted with the permission of W. W. Norton and Company.

would be spontaneous efflorescence. If disharmony were not in both man and nature, if it were only between them, man would be the ruthless overlord of nature, or its querulous oppressed subject. It is precisely the peculiar intermixture of support and frustration of man by nature which constitutes experience. The standing antitheses of philosophic thought, purpose and mechanism,

subject and object, necessity and freedom, mind and body, individual and general, are all of them attempts to formulate the fact that nature induces and partially sustains meanings and goods, and at critical junctures withdraws assistance and flouts its own creatures.

. . . . .

## EXPERIENCE, NATURE AND ART<sup>1</sup>

IF GREEK philosophy was correct in thinking of knowledge as contemplation rather than as a productive art, and if modern philosophy accepts this conclusion, then the only logical course is relative disparagement of all forms of production, since they are modes of practice which is by conception inferior to contemplation. The artistic is then secondary to the esthetic: "creation," to "taste," and the scientific *worker* — as we significantly say — is subordinate in rank and worth to the dilettante who enjoys the results of his labors. But if modern tendencies are justified in putting art and creation first, then the implications of this position should be avowed and carried through. It would then be seen that science is an art, that art is practice, and that the only distinction worth drawing is not between practice and theory, but between those modes of practice that are not intelligent, not inherently and immediately enjoyable, and those which are full of enjoyed meanings. When this perception dawns, it will be a commonplace that art — the mode of activity that is charged with meanings capable of immediately enjoyed possession — is the complete culmination of nature, and that "science" is properly a hand-maiden that conducts natural events to this happy issue. Thus would disappear the separations that trouble present thinking: division of everything into nature *and* experience, of experience into practice *and* theory, art *and*

science, or art into useful *and* fine, menial *and* free.

Thus the issue involved in experience as art in its pregnant sense and in art as processes and materials of nature continued by direction into achieved and enjoyed meanings, sums up in itself all the issues which have been previously considered. Thought, intelligence, science, is the intentional direction of natural events to meanings capable of immediate possession and enjoyment; this direction — which is operative art — is itself a natural event in which nature otherwise partial and incomplete comes fully to itself; so that objects of conscious experience, when reflectively chosen, form the "end" of nature. The doings and sufferings that form experience are, in the degree in which experience is intelligent or charged with meanings, a union of the precarious, novel, irregular with the settled, assured, and uniform — a union which also defines the artistic and the esthetic. For wherever there is art the contingent and ongoing no longer work at cross purposes with the formal and recurrent but commingle in harmony. And the distinguishing feature of conscious experience, of what for short is often called "consciousness," is that in it the instrumental and the final, meanings that are signs and clues and meanings that are immediately possessed, suffered and enjoyed, come together in one. And all of these things are pre-eminently true of art.

. . . . .

<sup>1</sup> *Experience and Nature*, pp. 357-59. Chicago, 1929. Reprinted with the permission of W. W. Norton and Company.

## Arthur O. Lovejoy

(1873- )

ARTHUR O. LOVEJOY was born in Berlin, Germany. He took his A.B. degree from the University of California, and did his graduate work at Harvard University and the University of Paris. From 1910 to 1938 he taught at Johns Hopkins University. His best-known books are *The Revolt Against Dualism* (1930) and *The Great Chain of Being* (1936).

Professor Lovejoy's touchstone has always been "that of congruence with the most indubitable fact of our experience, namely, that experience itself is temporal." The ultimate problem for him has been the place of time, progress, and change. This acceptance of temporalism and pluralism involves an epistemological dualism, and he has been consistent both in his dualism and his realism. His criticisms of the pragmatic epistemology have long been recognized for their acuteness.

### THE THIRTEEN PRAGMATISMS. II<sup>1</sup>

THE purpose of this paper, as indicated at the beginning of the former installment, is to discriminate all the more important doctrines going under the name of pragmatism which can be shown to be not only distinct, but also logically independent *inter se*. Three such divergent pragmatist contentions have thus far been noted. "Pragmatism" was primarily a theory concerning the "meaning" of propositions; but this theory, because of a latent ambiguity in its terms, breaks up into two: (1) The meaning of a proposition consists in the future consequences in experience which it (directly or indirectly) predicts as about to occur, no matter whether it be believed or not; (2) The meaning of a proposition

consists in the future consequences of believing it. The first of these was seen to suggest (though it by no means necessarily implies) the ~~third~~ variant of pragmatism, namely, a doctrine concerning the nature of truth; viz., that the truth of a proposition is identical with the occurrence of the series of experiences which it predicts, and can be said to be known only after such series is completed. "Its truth *is* its verification." This contention, that judgments acquire truth only in the degree in which they lose predictive character and practical bearings, has been shown to be wholly barren and useless, since it affords no answer to the real epistemological question concerning the criterion of the

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted from *Journal of Philosophy*, vol. v (January 16, 1908), pp. 29-39; with permission of the author and the editors.

truth of propositions whose specific predictive implications have not yet been experienced.

4. It is, however, not difficult to see through what associations of ideas some pragmatists have been led to emphasize this notion of the *ex post facto* character of all truth. Largely, it would appear, it derives its plausibility from its resemblance to the ordinary empirical doctrine that those general propositions are to be regarded as true which, so far as they have been applied, have been found to be realized in past experience. This latter doctrine, from which the former is often not clearly distinguished, may be set down as another of the things that pragmatism is frequently supposed to be. It is the doctrine sometimes sententiously expressed by the observation that those propositions are true which "will work" or "which you can live by." What the evolutionary empiricists who are fond of this observation almost always really mean by it, is that those judgments are true which hitherto have worked; in other and more precise words, that I am, in advance of the actual realization or verification of the future experiences which may be predicted by a given judgment, entitled to regard it as true if it is *similar* to, or is a special application of, a general class of judgments which my memory tells me have thus far had their implied predictions realized. But this is by no means identical with the principle mentioned in the preceding installment, and vigorously insisted upon by some pragmatists, that each *individual* judgment can *become* true only through, and contemporaneously with, the presentation in consciousness of those specific subsequent experiences which it points to and prognosticates.

5. If, now, we are to set down this evolutionary empiricist criterion of truth as one expression of pragmatism — at least as that is popularly understood — it is necessary to add that this formula, too, suffers from ambiguity, and therefore breaks up into two quite distinct criteria. The ambiguity is analogous to that already pointed out in the pragmatist's theory of meaning. A belief may "work" in two very different senses, either by having its actual predictions fulfilled, or

by contributing to increase the energies or efficiency or chance of survival of those who believe it. The Jews, for example believed persistently for many centuries that a national Messiah would come in the next generation to restore the independence and establish the supremacy of Israel. In one sense, this belief did not work; for the events which it predicted did not occur. But biologically considered it worked wonderfully well; for it assuredly did much to produce the extraordinary persistency of the Jewish racial character and the exceptional energy, self-confidence, and tenacity of purpose of the individual Jew. Many beliefs involving false predictions are biologically unfavorable, namely, if they lead to physical conduct ill adapted to the conditions of the believer's physical environment. You cannot "live by" the belief that fire will not burn. But, also, some false or never-realized predictions, and many beliefs having apparently no predictive character — and no capacity for empirical verification — have shown themselves to be excellent things to live by. And if we are to take the doctrine that the true is the "livable" in its second and more unquestionably pragmatistic sense — if we are to identify the validity of beliefs with their biological serviceableness — we should apparently have to classify as "true" many judgments which predict nothing, and many which confessedly predict what is not going to occur.

6. Partly, however, what I have called the theory of the *ex post facto* nature of truth is a somewhat blurred reflection of a certain metaphysical doctrine, which, although not always very explicitly put forward, appears to me to have a rather fundamental place in the characteristic mode of thought of most representatives of pragmatism. This is the doctrine of the real futurity or "openness" of the future, and of the determinative or "creative" efficiency of each "present" moment in the ever-transient process of conscious judgment, choice, and action. The two parts of the doctrine obviously enough go together: if the process truly brings into being at each new moment a genuinely new and unique increment of reality, then, so long as any moment's increment has not yet been brought

forth, it cannot yet be called in any intelligible sense real; and if, similarly, the thing that is to be is a sheer nonentity until it enters into actual, temporal experience, the moment in which it becomes an experience must be credited with the creation "*ex nihilo*" of a new item of being. This doctrine of what M. Bergson calls a *devenir réel*, and of the creative function of consciousness, which is the pregnant ontological preconception from which a great variety of confused pragmatic ideas have proceeded, unquestionably has certain epistemological implications. Such a metaphysics appears to imply the partial contingency and (from the standpoint of any present knowledge) indeterminateness of the future content of reality. But these implications are not synonymous with the *ex post facto* theory of truth in the generality with which that has usually been expressed. The future may be — and by the same pragmatists, when they adumbrate this sort of metaphysics, apparently is — regarded as presenting to our understanding only a narrow margin of the unpredictable; its general character, and the greater mass of its content, may be supposed, without departing from the conception in question, to be predetermined by the accumulated and crystallized results of reality up to date, of which any possible future and novel increment of being must be the child, and to which it must be capable of accommodation. And at all events, there is nothing in this sort of thoroughgoing metaphysical temporalism which justifies the denial of the possibility of the making of "true" judgments about contemporaneous or past (but not yet consciously verified) realities.

7. It is a frequently repeated observation of pragmatists, in moments when they are more mindful of the psychological than of the metaphysical antecedents of their diversely descended conceptions, that the true, in its most generalized character, is "the satisfactory"; it is, says James, that which "gives the maximal combination of satisfactions." Or, in Perry's careful formulation — with an amendment which we have recently been told, upon good authority, would make it entirely acceptable to a pragmatist — "the criterion of the truth of knowledge is the

satisfying character of the practical transition from cognitive expectation to fulfillment, or the resolution of doubt into practical immediacy." Now this doctrine which identifies the truth with the satisfactoriness of a given judgment may mean any one of three things. It may, in the first place, be a simple psychological observation — from which, I fancy, few would dissent — indicating the *genus* of feelings of which the "emotion of conviction" is a species. To doubt, to inquire, to have before the mind certain potential material of judgment that is not yet accepted as true, is, of course, to experience dissatisfaction; a specific sense of discomfort and of non-fulfillment is the emotional concomitant of the doubting or the deliberative moment, and is doubtless the principal spring which prompts men's search for truth. And to believe, to hold true, whatever more it may be, is always at least to be satisfied in some degree with one's mental content of the moment, to find it good, or at all events not so bad as some contrary judgment which, for its sin of insufficient satisfyingness, has been shut away into the outer darkness of non-acceptance.

8. But this psychological truism, that to pass from doubt to belief is to pass from dissatisfaction to a relative satisfaction, is quite a different thing from the first of the pragmatist epistemological contentions that appear to be based upon it. This asserts that the way to determine whether a proposition is true is to apply the test of "satisfyingness"; and to apply it directly and *simpliciter*. There is, according to this version of the nature of truth, to be no attempt to determine the differentia which distinguishes the species "conviction" from the genus "satisfaction," or the subspecies "highest discoverable type of certitude" from "conviction" in general; and there is to be no arranging of satisfactions in a hierarchy and no pretension to define the conditions under which a maker of rational judgments *ought* to be satisfied. From many expressions of pragmatist writers it would appear that, while the term "satisfaction" is "many dimensional," one dimension is as good as another; and that the final and decisive warrant for belief — the mark of the

valid judgment — is the capacity of the judgment to yield the maximum bulk of satisfaction, measured indifferently in any of its dimensions. But since the dimensions *are* many, it may manifestly turn out that the greatest total volume may not give the potential maximum of any given dimension taken singly. The liking for luminosity of meaning, or for conceptual consistency, or for completeness of empirical verification, may fail to get full satisfaction in a judgment; but the judgment may, it would seem, still be "true," if it compensates for these limitations by a preponderant satisfactoriness with reference to other desires or interests: by its congruency with our habitual ways of belief, or its charm for the imagination, or its tendency to beget a cheerful frame of mind in those who accept it.

I think it possible that some pragmatists may at this point protest that they know of no one who seriously holds this view; certainly, it appears to me to be a curious view to hold. But I think one is justified in calling upon all of the name who reject this doctrine to take (and faithfully observe) an oath to abstain from a fashion of language which they have much affected; to refrain from identifying the true with the satisfactory *simpliciter*, to cease speaking of satisfaction as a "criterion" of validity, and to confine their assimilation of the two concepts to the much more qualified and commonplace thesis which follows.

9. This is pragmatism number seven *plus* a more or less explicit admission that our "theoretic" satisfactions have a special character and special epistemological pretensions; that our "intellectual" demands — for clear meanings, for consistency, for evidence — are *not*, and cannot be, satisfied unless their peculiar claim to precedence in the determination of belief is recognized; and that this claim is a legitimate one, to which men should (although they often do not) subordinate their impulse to accept any conclusions that have any kind of satisfactoriness. According to this view, "satisfaction" is still insisted upon as an essential mark of the apprehension of "truth"; but it is precisely a satisfaction which is not to be had except

upon condition that other possible satisfactions be ignored or, in many cases, flatly rejected. Between this and the preceding (eighth) doctrine some pragmatist writers seem to waver. James, for example, often uses expressions (some of which have been quoted in the two foregoing paragraphs) implying the doctrine of the commensurability and equivalence of all satisfactions. But he elsewhere (e.g., in a controversy with Joseph in *Mind*, 1905) expressly distinguishes the "theoretic" from the "collateral" satisfactions connected with the processes of judging thought; and he does not appear to deny that the former may conflict with the latter, or that, in the event of such conflict, they ought to be preferred. To the objection, offered by his critic, that if such admissions be made the pragmatist's criterion of validity is not practically distinguishable from the intellectualist's, James opposes nothing more relevant than a sketch of the genesis and evolution of the demand of the human mind for consistency. This sketch purports to show — if I understand it — that the desire (more characteristic of some minds than of others) to avoid self-contradiction is historically engendered through the crystallization of repeated experiences of uniformity in "things" into fixed subjective habits of expecting specific uniformities — habits so fixed that when such an expectation is disappointed "our mental machinery refuses to run smoothly." How the transition from the idea of uniformity to that of consistency is accomplished here, remains obscure to me; but even supposing the evolution of the one into the other to be completely and convincingly traced, these interesting historical speculations do not show, they do not even tend to suggest, that the demand for consistency in our judgments, as we now find it — playing its captious and domineering rôle among our mental cravings — is not quite distinct from all its fellows and their rightful, though their often flouted, overlord. In the present sense, then, the pragmatist's criterion of truth, whether right or wrong, seems entirely destitute of any distinctive character; it is simply the old, intellectualist criterion, supplemented by the psychologically un-

disputable, but the logically functionless, remark that, after all, a "theoretic" satisfaction is a kind of satisfaction.

10. Another pragmatism, and one that undoubtedly has real epistemological bearings, is the doctrine of radical empiricism conjoined with the doctrine of the necessity and legitimacy of postulation; the doctrine, in other words, that "axioms are postulates" and that postulates are as valid as any human judgment ever can be, provided they be the expression of a genuine "practical" need. This may look like our eighth kind of pragmatism over again, expressed in other terms; but in certain important particulars it is really a distinct theory. It contains, in the first place, a special negative contention: namely, that there are no strictly compulsive or "necessary" general truths, no universal propositions that can force themselves upon the mind's acceptance apart from an uncoerced act of voluntary choice. And on its positive side, it identifies the true, not with those judgments which slip so easily into the mind that they afford a present emotional state of satisfaction, but with those that man's active nature requires as working presuppositions to be followed in its reaction upon present experience and its instinctive endeavor to shape future experience. This doctrine seems to me to be quite unequivocally expressed by Schiller in a well-known essay in *Personal Idealism*. "The 'necessity' of a postulate," we are told, "is simply an indication of our need. We want it, and so must have it, as a means to our ends. Thus its necessity is that of intelligent, purposive volition, not of psychical, and still less of physical, mechanism." "Behind the can't there always lurks a won't; the mind cannot stultify itself, because it will not renounce conceptions it needs to order its experiences. The feeling of necessity, therefore, is at bottom an emotional accompaniment of the purposive search for means to realize our ends."

11. A kindred but a much less thorough-going doctrine seems to constitute one of the pragmatisms of James. The author of *The Will to Believe* would, I suppose, still vigorously deny the possibility of reaching "necessary" conclusions with respect to many

issues, including some of the greatest importance in relation both to the purely utilitarian requirements of our living and to our higher interests; and he would, clearly, still maintain the propriety and the practical inevitableness of voluntary postulation in such cases. But that there are *some* truly coercive and indubitable truths, some items of *a priori* knowledge inhering in the native constitution of a rational mind, James pretty fully and frankly declares, in his recently published volume of lectures. "Our ready-made ideal framework for all sorts of possible objects follows from the very structure of our thinking. We can no more play fast and loose with these abstract relations than we can with our sense experiences. They coerce us; we must treat them consistently, whether or not we like the results." This, obviously, is no doctrine that axioms are postulates, or that behind every "can't" there lies a "won't"; it is the doctrine that axioms are necessities and that the action of voluntary choice in belief is always limited by a permanent system of *a priori* principles of possibility and impossibility inhering in the nature of intellect, at least as intellect is now evolved. It is incompatible, at most, with the opinion that there are not so numerous, nor so useful, axioms as some dogmatic philosophers have supposed, and that, when axioms fail us, postulates must in many cases be resorted to.

12. A point of pragmatist doctrine separable from (though not inconsistent with) either of the two last mentioned, is the assertion of the *equal* legitimacy of those postulates (such as the uniformity of causal connection, the general "reliability" of nature, and the like) which appear indispensable as presuppositions for effective dealing with the world of our physical experience, and of those which, though lacking this sort of "physical" necessity as completely as they do the logical sort, yet seem demanded in order to give meaning to, or encouragement in, men's moral strivings, or to satisfy the emotional or esthetic cravings of our complex nature. It is conceivable enough that some pragmatists should refuse to recognize the equal standing of these two classes of postulates, should accept the first while rejecting the second; and



it is a fact that not all who find a place for both agree as to the number and range of the second sort. The more extremely liberal forms of the doctrine of the right to postulate freely and to treat postulates as truths, tend to lapse into identity with the eighth variety of pragmatism, which identifies the true with the "maximally satisfying"; but in its more cautious and critical forms, the argument from the practical inevitableness of certain scientific to the legitimacy of certain ethico-religious postulates must be regarded as a distinct type of pragmatist epistemology, and perhaps the one which — if pragmatism ought to have practical bearings — best deserves the name.

13. Lastly, there remains a second pragmatist theory of the *meaning* of concepts or judgments — which brings us back to the topic, though by no means to precisely the doctrine, with which our enumeration began. It may be expressed thus: an essential part of our idea of any object or fact consists in an apprehension of its relation to some purpose or subjective interest on our part; so that no object of *thought* whatever could be just what, for our thought, it *is*, except through the mediation of some idea of purpose or some plan of action. The language of some pragmatist writers might lead one to suppose that they consider the *whole* meaning to be reducible to this teleological reference; but such a view does not seem to me intelligible, and it does not appear certain that any one really intends to maintain it, but it is evident that there are several logicians who think it both true and important to declare that a relation to a purpose constitutes an intrinsic and a determinative element in the connotation of any notion. It is, I suppose, such a principle that Moore intended to illustrate in recently pointing out that, however objective the virtues of a given candidate for office may be, he could neither be "clean" nor a candidate were there not present in the mind of everyone so representing him the idea of possible voting to be done. And I suppose the same view is, in part, at least, what Schiller has sought to enforce in these columns, in insisting that nobody can be "lost" except with the aid of the existence

in the universe of some purpose in some mind, requiring the presence of the "lost" person (or of the persons from whom he is lost) in some place or relation from which he is (or they are) excluded by virtue of his "lostness." Schiller appears to me to have entangled this theory of meaning in a confusing and illegitimate manner with questions about "truth" and "reality"; but to pursue this distinction would involve a somewhat long and complicated analysis, which may not here be undertaken.

These thirteen pragmatisms have been set down, not in a topical order, but according to the leading of those associations of ideas through which the ambiguities of the several doctrines, and the transitions from one to another, become relatively intelligible. But it may be useful to arrange them here in a more logical manner, while still retaining the original numbering. Those forms of theory, the separate enumeration of which results from distinctions made by this paper, but overlooked by pragmatist writers themselves — in other words, the doctrines formulated by pragmatists in more or less equivocal terms — are indicated by the sign (*a*); each group of doctrines hitherto improperly treated as single and univocal has a common superior number:

#### I. *Pragmatist Theories of Meaning.*

1. The "meaning" of any judgment consists wholly in the future consequences predicted by it, whether it is believed or not (*a*<sup>1</sup>).
2. The meaning of any judgment consists in the future consequences of believing it (*a*<sup>2</sup>).
13. The meaning of any idea or judgment always consists in part in the apprehension of the relation of some object to a conscious purpose (*a*<sup>3</sup>).

#### II. *Pragmatism as an Epistemologically Functionless Theory concerning the "Nature" of Truth.*

3. The truth of a judgment "consists in" the complete realization of the experience (or series of experiences) to which the judgment had antecedently pointed; propositions *are* not, but only *become*, true (*a*<sup>3</sup>).

III. *Pragmatist Theories of Knowledge, i.e., of the Criterion of the Validity of a Judgment.*

4. Those general propositions are true which so far, in past experience, have had their implied predictions realized; and there is no other criterion of the truth of a judgment ( $a^2$ ).

5. Those general propositions are true which have in past experience proven biologically serviceable to those who have lived by them; and this "livableness" is the ultimate criterion of the truth of a judgment ( $a^2$ ).

7. All apprehension of truth is a species of "satisfaction"; the true judgment meets some need, and all transition from doubt to conviction is a passage from a state of at least partial dissatisfaction to a state of relative satisfaction and harmony ( $a^3$ ). — This is strictly only a psychological observation, not an epistemological one; it becomes the latter by illicit interpretation into one of the two following.

8. The criterion of the truth of a judgment is its satisfactoriness, as such; satisfaction is "many dimensional," but all the dimensions are of commensurable epistemological values, and the maximum bulk of satisfaction in a judgment is the mark of its validity ( $a^3$ ).

9. The criterion of the truth of a judgment is the degree in which it meets the "theoretic" demands of our nature; these demands are special and distinctive, but their realization is none the less a kind of "satisfaction." ( $a^3$ ).

10. The sole criterion of the truth of a judgment is its practical serviceableness as a postulate; there is no general truth except postulated truth, resulting from some motivated determination of the will; "necessary" truths do not exist.

11. There are some necessary truths; but these are neither many nor practically adequate; and beyond them the resort to postulates is needful and legitimate.

12. Among the postulates which it is legitimate to take as the equivalent of truth, those which subserve the activities and enrich the content of the moral, esthetic, and religious life have a co-ordinate place with those which are presupposed by common sense and physical science as the basis of the activities of the physical life.

IV. *Pragmatism as an Ontological Theory.*

6. Temporal becoming is a fundamental character of reality; in this becoming the processes of consciousness have their essential and creative part. The future is strictly non-real and its character is partly indeterminate, dependent upon movements of consciousness the nature and direction of which can be wholly known only at the moments in which they become real in experience. (Sometimes more or less confused with 3.)

Each pragmatism of the thirteen should manifestly be given a name of its own, if confusion in future discussions is to be avoided. The present writer has neither the necessary ingenuity nor the ambition to devise a nomenclature so extensive. But however the several theories be designated, the fact of their difference, and of the incompatibility of some of them with some others, can hardly, just now, be too much insisted upon — in the interest of pragmatism itself. What the movement commonly so named most needs is a clarification of its formulas and a discrimination of certain sound and important ideas lying behind it from certain other ideas that are sound but not important, and certain that would be important if only they were not unsound. The present attempt to list the chief varieties, and to clear up the hidden ambiguities, of a doctrine nominally one and indivisible, is accordingly offered as a species of *Prolegomena zu einem jeden künftigen Pragmatismus*.

## PART SEVEN

### *Realism and Naturalism*

---

#### REALISM

THE earliest expression of realism in America was introduced from Scotland by Witherspoon and McCosh, both of them presidents of Princeton University. Common-sense realism, as it was usually called, bore little relation to modern realism. It was primarily an acceptance of ordinary, common-sense views as to the nature of the world and God. Its proof was an appeal to established beliefs and its emphasis was upon orthodoxy. McCosh held that men have intuitions which are direct and immediate perceptions of an objective order. No error is possible, therefore, at this level of knowledge. Error can only come from false association and inference. Designed as a safe and sound philosophy, it maintained a complete dualism between God and the world, body and soul, subject and object; it is this dualism which differentiates it most sharply from its later expression.

Modern realists have centered their attention on the problem of the relation of the knowing mind to the external object, and their dominant assertion has been that the world is real in the sense that it is independent of our knowing or experiencing it. Realism has always flourished in proportion to the vitality of idealism, its major foe, and it has tended to wane as idealism fell into disrepute.

It was really William James who was the father of modern realism as well as of pragmatism; his essay "Does Consciousness Exist?" published in 1904, was the opening gun in the warfare against idealism. It was there that James challenged the dualism of mind and matter which had reigned since the time of Descartes. Instead of bifurcating reality into two parts, one physical and the other mental, with all the resulting problems as to the relation between the two parts, he insisted that consciousness did not exist as an entity but only as a function. Mind and nature were not discrete substances as in common-sense realism, but mind was regarded as being only a function of the natural organism as it responds to its environment.

Ralph Barton Perry was probably the other most influential figure both in the attack on idealism and in the formulation of a realistic philosophy. In 1901 he had reviewed Royce's *The World and the Individual*, and had explicitly challenged the assumptions of absolute idealism; in 1910 he published in *The Journal of Philosophy* his famous article "The Ego-Centric Predicament." In it he recognizes an obvious situation, that no one can mention anything which is not an idea since in mentioning it he makes it an idea. Whatever he reports does stand in relation to him as his idea or experience. It is this which he

calls the "ego-centric predicament." But this is not an argument leading to the reduction of everything to the status of idea or to the statement that only ideas exist. It is simply a methodological difficulty, a redundant proposition to the effect that "every mentioned thing is mentioned." And that is no proposition at all. Realism had been given its right of way.

The story of the founding of the schools of Neo-Realism and Critical Realism is told in the article by Professor Montague. The basic issues upon which the Neo-Realists agreed were three. First, an understanding of the nature of the world is not to be found primarily through an analysis of the nature of knowledge. Second, knowledge occurs within the realm of being, and although there must be a distinction made between a knower and the thing known, there is no dichotomy between the two. And finally, the knowledge of things is immediate, not mediated by ideas or concepts; the object and the knower become one in the act of knowledge.

No sooner had the new realism emerged than two problems became central. In the first place, if the object and the subject are identical in the act of knowing, how can there ever be error? It was the very denial of the mediate character of ideas in the process of gaining knowledge that made the apparent fact of error and illusion impossible to explain. In the second place, there were many who felt that this argument was simply an old materialism in new form, in that mind had been reduced to purely physical dimensions. In abolishing the idealist structure had not all consciousness been lost in the collapse? In the attempt to escape from subjectivism had the new realist committed a worse mistake, that of reducing the psychic to the merely physical? These new problems were the setting for the movement known as Critical Realism.

Basic to this most recent realistic movement is the acceptance of the neo-realistic belief that objects exist independently of their being known, but basic also is a repudiation of the belief in the immediacy of knowledge. Instead of only two factors in the knowledge situation, a subject and an object which essentially merge, the critical realists insist that there is a triad. As Sellars puts it, there is a subject, an idea object, and a physical existent. It is the presence of this middle factor, or essence as it came to be called by Santayana and others, that makes it possible to explain the fact of error. If knowledge is mediate there is the possibility of illusion. On this basis, an idea which gives knowledge of its object is true. But this statement raised a series of issues which the critical realists have had some difficulty in answering. On this basis, what are the criteria for truth? Sellars himself has recognized the difficulty of checking up on the object if only the idea of it is given. It seems to land the critical realists back in essentially the problem of Locke who, because he knew only ideas and not the objects of the ideas, could have no way of knowing whether those ideas corresponded with the objects, or even whether or not the objects existed. It was this skepticism resulting from the epistemology of Locke which was the starting point for Berkeleyian idealism. Have we seen a startling turn of the wheel whereby realism, which took its rise in opposition to idealism, may now be posing a problem which may bring a return to idealism?

Among those who were influential in the development of Neo-Realism are E. B. Holt, Walter T. Marvin, W. P. Montague, Ralph Barton Perry, Walter Pitkin, and E. G. Spaulding. The men who have been best known in Critical Realism are Durant Drake,

A. O. Lovejoy, J. B. Pratt, A. K. Rogers, George Santayana, R. W. Sellars, and C. A. Strong.

### NATURALISM

THE fact that Realism and Naturalism have been grouped together in a single part does not mean that they are interchangeable terms. It is true that many realists are naturalists but there are some who are not, and it is also true that many naturalists are pragmatists. Whether there are any idealists who could be considered naturalists is a much more dubious question.

In many quarters, the word "naturalism" has become less of a descriptive term than a call to battle, and the result is a decided need for a greater understanding of what the term involves. Sellars has said that naturalism is an outlook or attitude toward reality rather than a fixed and dogmatic set of principles or formulas. In its repudiation of the traditional dualism it insists that whatever reality may be, it follows uniform patterns, is subject to the same laws of behavior, and is knowable in the same way. It does not try necessarily to define what reality is, but it does say that there is no evidence of two metaphysical orders set over against each other, behaving in essentially different ways, and subject to different forms of knowing.

This is not to say that naturalists do not recognize the values which lie back of such dualisms. It is understood that dualists have usually been motivated by loyal devotion to certain aspects of experience as well as by a realization of the precariousness of their values. Hence they felt the necessity of raising these values above the world of the changing into a realm of permanence. In spite of this, the naturalist feels that there must be an increasing repudiation of any metaphysical dualism. With the development of science has come a greater control over life, until gradually that which was fleeting and precarious has been brought into comparative security. It is not surprising that a faith in this method should have grown, and a reluctance to admit that any part of reality lies in a world apart from this control and understanding.

Naturalism has often been confused with atheism and identified with pessimism. For many, Bertrand Russell is regarded as the outstanding exponent of naturalism, and his despair as the inevitable outcome of such a philosophy. His famous essay, "The Free Man's Worship," is often quoted. "The life of Man is a long march through the night, surrounded by invisible foes, tortured by weariness and pain, towards a goal that few can hope to reach, and where none may tarry long." But it seems to many naturalists that Russell has separated man from his world as much as has any supernaturalist. The latter makes man's spirit at home in the universe and his body an intruder; Russell finds his body a part of the world but his spirit hopelessly lost. For him, the spirit, though it may have sprung from the natural world, is nonetheless alien in it, and man is condemned to live out his days in a universe which has repudiated him.

It is this attitude which American naturalists in the main have rejected. Woodbridge, Dewey, Santayana, Sellars, and Otto would agree in this, at least. They would recognize that men die and their hopes fail, but they would also say that not only is there no evidence that the universe is malevolent, but there is abundant proof that there are natural forces with which man may ally himself, and upon which he can build his hopes.

The unity of man with nature has been stressed with especial force by Dean Woodbridge. "For man does not stand outside of nature and ask her questions. He stands inside." Intelligence is not something external to nature, imported in order to bring rational order and comprehension. It is as much a part of nature as anything else. "Our world is illumined by thought. . . . The gain, however, is still natural. It is another instance of natural teleology. For nature produces thinking beings as well as whirling stars."

Perhaps the differences between the naturalist and non-naturalist emerge most clearly in regard to the problem of evil. For the naturalist the universe is not good in the sense that values are preserved in some transcendent realm, nor because evil will ultimately seem good when seen in the light of eternity. Naturalists do not blink the fact of tragedy. They are apt to say with William James that this is a world of real gains and real losses. But there is a sense in which for them this is a "good" world. It has produced intelligence, and it has given support to man's efforts to build a world nearer to his desires. To quote Dean Woodbridge again: "Ours is the best possible world only because it has the capacity to engender and support the effort to make it better."

Dean Woodbridge once said that among living philosophers he owed most to Santayana, and he added that the *Life of Reason* was a book he wished he could have written. Morris Cohen has made a similar comment pointing to the wide influence Santayana has had, especially in the formulation of contemporary naturalism.

It would be difficult to understand Santayana without considering his background. He was born in Spain of Spanish parents, and came to America when he was nine years of age. From then until he was nearly fifty he lived in this country. He was educated in Boston and Cambridge, and taught for a number of years at Harvard. There seems little of the alien about him. He has done all his writing in the English language. Yet, as he has admitted, the whole Anglo-Saxon tradition has always been a medium to him rather than a source, and his natural affinities have been elsewhere. Catholic Spain has kept its hold upon him, and the result has been a striking combination of modern naturalism and Catholic Christianity.

His naturalism started as a strong reaction to the cosmic optimism of idealism. Speaking of Royce and the idealists, he said: "That which repelled me . . . was the survival of a sort of forced optimism and pulpit unction, by which a cruel and nasty world, painted by them in the most lurid colors, was nevertheless set up as the model and standard of what ought to be." He later remarked that there was nothing cheaper than idealism.

His naturalism, however, has distinctive characteristics which mark it off from the work of the equally naturalistic Dewey. Like Woodbridge, he holds that reason is not alien to nature, that it is nature's own goal and climax. But reason has two functions, one instrumental, the other contemplative. He recognizes the necessity of the former, of using reason to meet the necessities of life. But he has little but contempt for this function. In so far as thought is practical it is not worth having. It is the free, imaginative, contemplative pursuit of ideas which he values. For the life of reason in its deepest moments is that part of experience which perceives ideals or essences. This attitude is responsible for some of his famous aphorisms. "Intelligence is but one centrifugal ray, darting from the slime to the stars." "Reason is a lyric cry in the midst of business."

Santayana's naturalism by no means rules out spirit and its interests, but it does decidedly limit its field. Spirit is no efficient cause. It is matter which determines the existence of mind, while mind gives value to matter. In other words, although spirit is powerless, all nature depends upon it in the sense that without it there could be no value. Like Spinoza, he builds his life of reason and spirit upon an unwavering belief in determinism. "Belief in indeterminism is a sign of indeterminism. No commanding or steady intellect flirts with so miserable a possibility, which in so far as it actually prevailed would make virtue impotent and experience . . . impossible."

This view is, of course, essentially a spectator philosophy. Man cannot expect to participate in the mechanism. He listens and observes, "being at once impotent and supreme." There is beauty in the world, and its enjoyment is the goal of consciousness. As Santayana says of Lucretius: "Allowed to look once upon the wonderful spectacle . . . we should look and admire, for tomorrow we die."

There is in Santayana's views a complete system of philosophy. From the standpoint of science it is materialistic; in ethics it is humanistic. It turns to science for an interpretation of the facts, and to the happiness of men on earth for its ideal. The beginning of philosophic wisdom as well as the basis for rational living lies in the determination to keep the real and the ideal related. Santayana agrees with James that the world will be saved by those who believe that the real and the ideal must be kept in dynamic interconnection. Any ideal which is formulated without regard to the physical conditions of life is futile, and any interpretation of the real which does not take into account its ideal possibilities is blind. He makes a comment on Aristotle which is illuminating as regards his own philosophy. "In Aristotle the conception of human nature is perfectly sound, everything ideal has a natural basis, and everything natural an ideal fulfillment."

Whether or not life has genuine significance is not always clear. "That life is worth living is the most necessary of assumptions, and, were it not assumed, the most impossible of conclusions." Detachment becomes the necessary virtue. "A philosopher . . . is disposed to confront his destiny, whatever it may be, with zest when possible, with resignation when necessary, and not seldom with amusement." Such significance as man may achieve can only come through the contemplation of the eternal forms. Of course, there is a certain sadness as man views his inevitable mortality, but the realization of the vanity of life is the condition for any philosophy of beauty or of dignity. At long last man rises above his own fate as he realizes that though the things which are seen are temporal, there is a realm of unseen things which is eternal.

In spite of his complete naturalism, there is a sense in which it might be said that Santayana's life-long preoccupation has been with religion. He tells us that as a boy his sympathies were always with those who were devout believers, and that he thought how glorious it would have been to be a Dominican monk. But when he comes to define religion he repudiates not only a supernatural basis but also an interpretation in terms of human betterment. Religion is purely a symbolic, poetic work of the imagination. It is fantastic to think that religion contains at any point a literal interpretation of life. Rather it is the free dream of men confined to a world of matter. "Religion is the love of life in the consciousness of its impotence." Whenever religion tries to be literal it only succeeds in becoming superstitious. Only as it is content to remain wisdom expressed in fancy,

and to renounce forever any concern with changing the world can it fulfill its function. Surely there is an echo of medieval Catholicism in his belief that "Religion, when wholly spiritual, could do nothing but succor the afflicted, understand and forgive the sinful, and pass through the sad pageant of life unspotted and resigned."

There is no belief whatever in human immortality. The glory of life is to be found only as we accept the fact of death as the opportunity to live in the spirit. The life of the spirit has two phases: piety to the necessary conditions of life and reverence for the physical sources of being; and, spirituality, by which Santayana means devotion to ideal ends. Such is the good life: frank acceptance of the natural conditions and limitations of our humanity, joined with the contemplation of, and devotion to, the realm of ends which belongs to the eternal world.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- COHEN, MORRIS, *REASON AND NATURE*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1931.
- DRAKE, DURANT, *MIND AND ITS PLACE IN NATURE*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1925.
- HARLOW, V. I., *A BIBLIOGRAPHY AND GENETIC STUDY OF AMERICAN REALISM*. Oklahoma City: Harlow Publishing Company, 1931.
- LOVEJOY, ARTHUR O., *THE REVOLT AGAINST DUALISM*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1930.
- LOVEJOY, ARTHUR O., *THE GREAT CHAIN OF BEING*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936.
- MONTAGUE, WILLIAM P., *THE WAYS OF KNOWING*. London: Allen and Unwin, 1925.
- PERRY, RALPH BARTON, *PRESENT PHILOSOPHICAL TENDENCIES*. New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1912.
- PERRY, RALPH BARTON, *PHILOSOPHY OF THE RECENT PAST*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926.
- PERRY, RALPH BARTON, *GENERAL THEORY OF VALUE*. New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1926.
- PRATT, JAMES B., *MATTER AND SPIRIT*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1926.
- PRATT, JAMES B., *PERSONAL REALISM*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1937.
- PRATT, JAMES B., *NATURALISM*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939.
- SANTAYANA, GEORGE, *THE SENSE OF BEAUTY*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1896.
- SANTAYANA, GEORGE, *INTERPRETATIONS OF POETRY AND RELIGION*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1900.
- SANTAYANA, GEORGE, *THE LIFE OF REASON*. 5 vols. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905-06.
- SANTAYANA, GEORGE, *THREE PHILOSOPHICAL POETS*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910.
- SANTAYANA, GEORGE, *WINDS OF DOCTRINE*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913.
- SANTAYANA, GEORGE, *CHARACTER AND OPINION IN THE UNITED STATES*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920.
- SANTAYANA, GEORGE, *SOLILOQUIES IN ENGLAND*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921.
- SANTAYANA, GEORGE, *SCEPTICISM AND ANIMAL FAITH*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923.
- SANTAYANA, GEORGE, *DIALOGUES IN LIMBO*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925.
- SANTAYANA, GEORGE, *PLATONISM AND THE SPIRITUAL LIFE*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1927.
- SANTAYANA, GEORGE, *THE REALM OF ESSENCE*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929.
- SANTAYANA, GEORGE, *THE REALM OF MATTER*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930.
- SANTAYANA, GEORGE, *THE GENTEEL TRADITION AT BAY*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931.
- SANTAYANA, GEORGE, *THE REALM OF TRUTH*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1938.
- SANTAYANA, GEORGE, *THE REALM OF SPIRIT*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940.
- SELLARS, ROY WOOD, *EVOLUTIONARY NATURALISM*. Chicago: Open Court Publishing Co., 1922.
- SELLARS, ROY WOOD, *THE PRINCIPLES AND PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1926.



- SELLARS, ROY WOOD, *THE PHILOSOPHY OF PHYSICAL REALISM*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1932.
- WOODBIDGE, F. J. E., *THE REALM OF MIND*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1926.
- WOODBIDGE, F. J. E., *THE SON OF APOLLO: THE THEMES OF PLATO*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1929.
- WOODBIDGE, F. J. E., *NATURE AND MIND*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1937.
- WOODBIDGE, F. J. E., *AN ESSAY ON NATURE*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1940.
- ADAMS, G., and W. P. MONTAGUE, editors, *CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY*. 2 vols. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1930.
- THE NEW REALISM: COÖPERATIVE STUDIES IN PHILOSOPHY*. Edwin B. Holt, Walter T. Marvin, William P. Montague, Ralph B. Perry, Walter B. Pitkin, and Edward Gleason Spaulding. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1912.
- ESSAYS IN CRITICAL REALISM*. Durant Drake, Arthur O. Lovejoy, James B. Pratt, Arthur K. Rogers, George Santayana, Roy Wood Sellars, and Charles A. Strong. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1920.



# William Pepperell Montague

(1873- )

PROFESSOR MONTAGUE was deeply interested as a boy in religion, although he was alienated by the ugliness of its expression in the small New England village where he lived. When he was about twelve he read Bellamy's *Looking Backward* which made him a socialist. His undergraduate years were spent at Harvard under the influence chiefly of Royce. He has taught for many years at Barnard College, Columbia University.

The article here printed gives a summary of the history of realism by one who has been a part of that movement from the beginning. He has said that his two interests have been the formulation of an epistemology that could be used as a prerequisite to a worth-while philosophy, and a religion that could be regarded as scientifically valid. He summarizes his more recent position as "a spiritualistic or animistic materialism," and he adds "That the world is a spirit, and that we are; and that perhaps we share even the immortality of a life that contains and sustains us, is a creed almost too happy and too good to be true. And yet I do believe that if not true it is something very like the truth."

## THE STORY OF AMERICAN REALISM<sup>1</sup>

### I. THE PRE-REALISTIC BACKGROUND

IN AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY at the end of the nineteenth century there was small interest in Empiricism and almost no interest in Realism.

The great Thomistic realism of the Catholics was unfortunately regarded by the non-Catholics as too closely bound up with theological dogmas to be of any significance for secular thought. The realistic doctrines of the Scottish school, at one time rather widely

current in the country and expressed with vigor by McCosh at Princeton, had passed away. The agnostic realism of Spencer and Hamilton had not affected to any extent the teaching in the universities. The traces of realism, both Platonic and particularistic, in the philosophy of C. S. Peirce had not attracted attention, and the same may be said of the kind of realism which Hyslop, a reader of the valuable but little-known work of Thomas Case, combined with his spiritistic

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophy*, vol. 12, no. 46, pp. 140-150, 155-161. Reprinted with the permission of the editor and Macmillan and Company, Ltd., London.

beliefs. Paul Carus, whose blend of Buddhism and psycho-physical monism contained realistic elements, exerted little influence on academic philosophy, and he himself never received from the universities the recognition which his valuable services to philosophic journalism should have elicited.

In contrast to these fragmentary realistic tendencies, Idealism, both epistemological and ontological, was everywhere rampant. Even before the Transcendentalism of Emerson and Alcott had quite died away in New England Doctor W. T. Harris, the much respected United States Commissioner of Education, had organized a group in St. Louis for the study of Hegelianism and had founded the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*. The Idealism thus started in the Middle West was further continued by Wenley at Michigan and by many others. G. H. Howison at the University of California had developed a very original though not thoroughly worked out system of pluralistic idealism in which the monadism of Leibniz and the subjectivism of Fichte were combined in a new synthesis. And by the force of his personality and the ardor of his convictions he created on the Pacific coast an enthusiasm for philosophy that still endures. So much for the West. In the East, Thomas Davidson at his "Bread-Winners' College" in New York was preaching a form of pluralistic idealism similar to that of Howison but more voluntaristic, and strongly colored by the thought of Rosmini. At the universities, there were Creighton at Cornell, Ormond at Princeton, Fullerton at Pennsylvania, Miss Calkins at Wellesley, Butler at Columbia, Ladd and Duncan at Yale (more Lotzian than Hegelian), and Borden P. Bowne at Boston University, whose "Personalism" is being vigorously continued today by Brightman and Flewelling. Finally at Harvard, there were Everett, Palmer, Muensterberg, and Royce. (I have listed merely the names that come to mind, and many others should doubtless be added.)

Most of these idealists were "Right Wing" rather than "Left." From the Orthodox Christian Theism of Bowne to the Personalistic Absolutism of Royce there was little of the Spinozistic or pantheistic tendency of

Bradleyan idealism. Howison, Fullerton, and Davidson were, however, in successively increasing degree aloof from the position of traditional religion; and Muensterberg with considerable originality used Fichtean transcendentalism as a façade for the thoroughgoing mechanistic naturalism which he applied to the existential world of phenomena.

## II. THE REVOLT OF THE PRAGMATISTS

The first decade of the present century was a time of change and insurgency in American philosophy. The pragmatism of William James, foreshadowed in his great *Psychology* and explicitly proclaimed in his California address in 1898, was systematically expounded in the books entitled *Pragmatism* and *The Meaning of Truth*. During these same years John Dewey, first at Chicago and later at Columbia, had developed independently of James, but in close sympathy with him, the form of pragmatic philosophy known as Instrumentalism. Though the pragmatism of James and the instrumentalism of Dewey were alike in opposing the monism and intellectualism of the dominant forms of idealism, it is my impression that it was the metaphysical and psychological faults of those doctrines that aroused James to revolt, while for Dewey it was rather the sociological and methodological weaknesses of idealism that merited attack. As a result of this difference in emphasis, the philosophy of James developed into a metaphysical pluralism stressing the free will and independence of the individual as opposed to the idea of what he termed the "block universe" of the absolutists. This personalistic pluralism was later extended to the even more complete pluralism of *Radical Empiricism*. On the other hand, Dewey's instrumentalism, true to its name, developed from its first theoretical expression in his *Essays on Experimental Logic* into increasingly practicalistic treatises on education and social questions, in which the problems of traditional metaphysics were less and less stressed and finally abandoned as outmoded and artificial. In short, the instrumentalism of Dewey, both in its practicalistic motivation and in its anti-metaphysical outcome, has proved itself to be for

better or for worse more purely pragmatic than pragmatism itself.

### III. THE NEW REALISTS AND THEIR PROGRAM

It was, I think, in the spring of 1910 that six teachers of philosophy formed a group for the purpose of expounding and defending a new kind of realistic philosophy. The group consisted of Perry and Holt from Harvard, Marvin and Spaulding from Princeton, Pitkin and myself from Columbia. After a few meetings we published in *The Journal of Philosophy* "A Program and First Platform of Six Realists." This co-operative article was followed in a year and a half by a co-operative book entitled *The New Realism*.

Although the impressions of American realism that are to be sketched in this paper are almost exclusively concerned with the organized groups calling themselves "New Realists" and "Critical Realists," it is appropriate to mention at least the names of six American philosophers who, though they were not officially members of either group, have during the past thirty years in various ways and in varying degree expounded a realistic philosophy. These "unofficial" realists are: first and most important of the series, Woodbridge of Columbia (who was invited but refused to join the New Realists), McGilvary of Wisconsin, Boodin (now) of the University of California at Los Angeles, Cohen of the College of the City of New York, Loewenberg of the University of California, and Macintosh of Yale.

We had all been realists prior to our forming the group, and each of us had written papers in which realism was implicitly or explicitly defended. I think that Perry and I wrote the first two of the explicitly realistic articles, and these were each inspired by the bitter attack on the realistic standpoint contained in the first volume of his Gifford Lectures by our teacher, Professor Royce. My article in *The Philosophical Review* for March, 1901, was entitled "Professor Royce's Refutation of Realism"; and Perry's article, entitled "Professor Royce's Refutation of Realism and Pluralism," was printed in *The Monist* for October of the same year. Though the members of our new group differed widely

in their metaphysical views, there were certain methodological and epistemological postulates which we shared in common. I may summarize them as follows:

1. Philosophers should follow the example of scientists and co-operate rather than work alone. The co-operation which we were to practice consisted in each man showing his essay to the others, taking account of their suggestions, and securing not unanimous agreement with every proposition, but general assent to the essay as a whole.

I am not sure that this precept was put into practice to any very significant extent. We read one another's papers and listened conscientiously to one another's criticisms, and we did for the most part make the revisions or at least the omissions that were requested, but I am afraid that especially on matters about which we felt strongly there tended to develop among us a tacit and I hope an unconscious understanding which if made explicit could have been expressed as "I'll pass your stuff if you'll pass mine."

2. Philosophers should follow the example of scientists in isolating their problems and tackling them one by one. We were to follow this precept by isolating the epistemological problem and studying the cognitive relation obtaining between any knower or apprehender and any object that he knows or apprehends without prejudging or even raising the question as to the ultimate nature of the apprehending subjects or of the apprehended objects.

I think that we stuck to this precept fairly consistently. If a certain amount of ontology and cosmology was included in each of the essays in our book it was by way of supplementation and clarification of the central issue, which was the question of whether the cognitive relation was or was not a necessary condition for the reality of the objects cognized. The point was of especial importance to me because I had a metaphysics less naturalistic and more dualistic than that of the others — with the possible exception of Pitkin — and I wanted to be quite sure that our agreement on the realistic theory that *knowledge as such makes no difference to the objects known* was not going to commit us to any

theory as to the nature of those objects or of man's place among them.

3. Some at least of the *particulars* of which we are conscious exist when we are not conscious of them.

This was the ordinary particularistic or *existential* realism of common sense.

4. Some at least of the *essences or universals* of which we are conscious subsist when we are not conscious of them.

This was Platonic or *subsistential* realism.

5. Some at least of the particulars as well as the universals that are real are apprehended directly rather than indirectly through copies or mental images.

This was the *presentative* realism of Reid as contrasted with the representative realism or epistemological dualism of Descartes and Locke.

It will be seen from the last three of our five postulates that we planned to revive and defend ordinary realism by adding to it Platonism and by subtracting from it the dualistic or copy theory of knowledge.

#### IV. THE ARGUMENT FOR EXISTENTIAL REALISM

The general argument for our new realism as applied to particular things in space and time was itself not new but old. It consisted in the attempt to show by empirical examination and inference that the things that are believed to be real do not seem to depend on the fact that they can figure as objects of perceptual and conceptual experience. To prove this independence directly by Mill's Method of Difference is of course impossible; and to demand it of the realist is both unfair and absurd. We can bring a dog into the presence of a cat and observe that he growls, then take him away and note that the growling ceases and thereupon infer with high probability that the dog's growling depended upon his being in the presence of the cat. Or, substituting a chair and a book for the cat, we can introduce a dog to their presence and by the same Method of Difference infer that his behavior is not affected by and hence not dependent upon his being in the presence of those objects. But we cannot look at a thing before we see it or after we have seen it

and note whether our seeing it has changed its appearance. Yet, as Perry so conclusively showed in his classic paper on *The Egocentric Predicament*, it does not follow because an object's independence of our experiencing it cannot be proved by the Method of Difference that therefore it cannot be proved by some other method. Still less does it follow that the idealist's hypothesis of the dependence of objects upon consciousness is implied by the fact that when objects are observed, consciousness is always present.

The presence of consciousness together with the objects of which we are conscious is merely a tautology which leaves the dependence or independence of the objects an open question to be decided by inference from their behavior *while under observation*.

The situation is analogous to the one in which we find the stars always present together with human affairs. If we wish to refute the astrologer's claim that human affairs depend upon the presence of the stars, we cannot do it by removing the stars and taking note of what then happens. So far as the Method of Difference is concerned we are to be sure in a "predicament." But despite our predicament we seek confidently to show that there are no constant or causally significant correlations between the behavior (conjunctions) of the heavenly bodies and the episodes of men's lives. In the same way and with at least as much success, we as realists can seek to show that the behavior of objects when co-present with consciousness reveals no constant or causally significant correlations with that consciousness. Even the astrologer, whatever his other fallacies, does not rest his case merely upon the irremediable co-presence of the course of the stars and the course of human affairs. But the idealist, whatever his other virtues, does incline to rest *his* case on the mere co-presence of the two terms in the situation whose dependence or independence is at issue. *He entrenches himself behind a tautology in the belief that it is an axiom.* And as Doctor G. E. Moore has remarked, if only the idealist can once be made to entertain even as a bare possibility the hypothesis that the objects of which we are aware may nevertheless be in-

dependent of that awareness, half the battle for realism is won. For whether we consider the objects of ordinary perception or the more recondite objects of science, it is somewhat pathetically obvious that in neither case does their behavior show any signs of being affected by their presence in consciousness. They come and go as they list, and while our experience and its changes depend largely upon them and upon their changes, the converse is not true. Of all the invariant relations or "laws" of physical nature, I know of no single one that depends for its reality upon the mere fact that it is or can be experienced.

#### V. THE ARGUMENT FOR SUBSISTENTIAL REALISM

The method of proving the independent reality of the universals or essences that *subsist* is the same as the method of proving the independent reality of the particular things or events that *exist*. That  $7 + 5 = 12$  is entirely explained by the natures of seven, of five, and of twelve, and not in the least by the nature of consciousness. The "egocentric predicament" applies as much and means as little for our knowledge of forms as for our knowledge of particular facts. Whether the forms are numbers or non-quantitative qualities like blue and yellow, their relations and configurations exhibit a complete indifference to the fact that we are conscious of them. It is of course true that *which* of the forms or *which* of the events a man will experience at any moment will be determined by the condition of his organism and even by his memories and interests at that moment. But the function of these subjective factors is *selective* rather than *constitutive*, and the objects themselves are to be explained in terms of their relations to one another and not in terms of their relations to the process of selecting them.

#### VI. THE ARGUMENT FOR A PRESENTATIVE RATHER THAN A REPRESENTATIVE OR COPY-THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

For an object to be perceived it is necessary either that it should stimulate the percipient organism as with waves of light or sound, or

else that an effect similar to that of a stimulus should in some other way be produced in the organism. Thus we shall normally perceive a sphere in front of us if there actually is such a sphere and if it sends to our eyes light waves and by that means ultimately produces a certain specific effect in our brain. But if that same specific effect is produced by two flat disks acting through the mechanism of a stereoscope, we shall perceive a sphere as clearly as in the other case. Everybody admits such facts as these; and there are many who have argued that because an effect in the organism must precede the perception of an object it must follow that the perceived object is itself identical with the effect produced in the organism. The truth of such a conclusion would mean that the whole perceptual world is inside the percipient and that it is at best no more than a copy of the external world of physical entities.

Now, we New Realists believed that this<sup>1</sup> epistemological dualism was not implied by the premises invoked in its support. We argued that Descartes, Locke, and their followers were guilty of a sheer *non sequitur* in concluding that the object perceived must be identical with the intra-organic means by which it was perceived, and that as the latter was internal the former would have to be equally internal.

The arguments for our position in this matter were not, I think, as clear and consistent as they should have been. We were perhaps all in agreement that the fact that perceived objects at least *appear* to be external created a presumption that they were really external and that the burden of proof rested upon those who would deny that presumption. I think we were also agreed that the space and time of perceptual experience, despite specific aberrations that might call for correction, took up so to speak "all the room there was," and that consequently there was no room left for a conceptual or inferred space and time that were to be real beyond and behind the realm of perceived and perceivable objects. These seemed to be as external as possible; and if *they* were not really outside us there was nothing else that could be.

To the extent that we attempted to supple-

ment these rather vague feelings by explicit arguments, we fell into disagreement, and of those disagreements I shall speak later.

#### VII. NEW REALISM IN RELATION TO IDEALISM

The fallacies of idealism as they appeared to us can be briefly stated, and such a statement may help to clarify our own position.

The first and cardinal fallacy of idealists was their ascription of self-evidence to the proposition that the relation of the knower to the object known is an "internal relation," that is, a relation such that the terms related are dependent upon the existence of the relation.

This first dogma, asserting the axiomatization of idealism, has been held by idealists from Berkeley to Bradley. The realist of course denies that the relation of the knower to the object known is self-evidently revealed as "internal." He makes no counter claim for the self-evidence of the "externality" of the cognitive relation, but he does hold that the latter can be proved inductively.

Now when the idealist has once committed himself to the postulate that no object can exist apart from consciousness or experience, he finds himself in a predicament. The universe is obviously too large and long enduring for him to regard it as dependent upon the finite experience of himself and his neighbors; hence there must be postulated an infinite and absolute experience in which it is contained and on which it does depend. The second postulate of Absolutism is thus made necessary to repair the havoc wrought by the first postulate of Subjectivism. If, however, we refuse as realists to take the first step, we are under no compulsion to take the second. If events can exist in their own right without the need of depending on consciousness, the hypothesis of an absolute consciousness is no longer demanded by the situation. The Absolute may of course be inferrible on other grounds, but not on the grounds of epistemology.

#### VIII. NEW REALISM IN RELATION TO PRAGMATISM

From the standpoint of most realistic observers, the essential doctrine of pragmatism

consists of two postulates which we may term respectively the Methodological postulate of *Practicalism* (which states a theory as to the *criterion* of truth), and the epistemological postulate of *relativism* (which states a theory as to the *meaning* of truth). The methodological postulate is very ambiguous, and appears to be variously interpreted even by the pragmatists themselves. When one says that a proposition can be believed to be true if it works well in practice or if it leads to successful consequences, one may mean either (1) that accepting the proposition brings happiness or (2) that it brings a sensory experience of which the proposition in question was an anticipation. A religious creed, for example, may be held to be true on the ground that it enables its adherents to function efficiently and to meet the crises of life with serenity and courage. In this sense it works well and leads to successful results in practice. But I think that most realists would regard the correlation between the truth of a proposition and its "working well" in this sense as very imperfect and unreliable. There are many false beliefs that have worked well over long periods of time for many people, and again there are many true propositions that can bring despair and even paralysis of action to some of the persons who believe them. If on the other hand we take "working well" or "successful consequence in practice" to mean *sensory fulfillment of anticipation*, then indeed we have a reliable criterion of truth — which is, however, nothing but old-fashioned empiricism under a new name.

But it was not the methodological postulate of pragmatism (even when interpreted "humanistically" rather than empirically) to which realists as such were mainly opposed, but rather the epistemological postulate which grew out of it. To regard the successful experiences that ensue from a belief as a criterion of its truth is one thing — and a thing that is sometimes bad and sometimes good — but to assume that *truth itself consists in the process by which it is verified* is a different thing and always bad. It makes truth a psychological affair, and as such an affair of individual experience and relative to



each individual who has the experience. I may experience successful consequences from believing that the proposition "A is B" is true; you may experience consequences that are equally successful and successful in the same sense from believing that it is false. Shall we then say that the same proposition is at once both true and false? True for me and false for you? This relativistic epistemology of the pragmatists was rejected by the realists. The truth (or falsity) of a proposition *antedates* the process by which it is verified (or refuted). The proposition "Mars is inhabited by intelligent beings" is either true or false; but it may be a long time before we discover which. When and if we do discover whether the proposition is true it will occur to nobody except a philosophic pragmatist in the privacy of his study to imagine that the proposition waited until that moment to *become* true or to *become* false. The facts about Mars, like other facts in the world, will be regarded as having been what they were prior to the events of their discovery or verification.

To this realistic attitude the pragmatists replied by saying that we were making a fetish of "Truth in the abstract" or "Truth with a capital T" which could never be experienced and which consequently had no use or meaning. And they would add the comment that while it was all very well for us to say that truth was the relation of "agreement between judgments and realities," we ought at the same time to admit that such agreement could only be found in individual experiences to which therefore it was relative and on which it was dependent.

It seems to me that we have here a recurrence of the "*egocentric predicament*," but in an interestingly altered form. In the original form of the "predicament" we are challenged by the *idealists* to point to a case of *reality* apart from experience. In the new form of the "predicament" we are challenged by the *pragmatists* to point to a case of *truth* (i.e., the agreement relation of judgments with reality) apart from experience. We answered the idealist by pointing out that though quite obviously facts could never be observed in the absence of experiencing them, yet when they

were observed in the presence of experience they gave every sign of being independent of that experience with which they were co-present. And as it was with *facts* so also is it with *truth*, which is the special relation of agreement or correspondence obtaining between facts and the judgments about them. The agreements can never be discovered when absent from the experience that verifies them, but when discovered in that experience they give every sign of not depending upon it. When Columbus verifies his hypothesis that there is land to the westward of Europe; when Newton verifies his gravitational hypothesis; when Pythagoras verifies his geometrical hypothesis — in each and every case the truth that is verified reveals a structure that could not have depended upon or have had to "wait for" the verifying experience in order to be what it is. The whole nature and behavior of things testifies to the realists' conclusion that the function of experience in general and of verification in particular is not to create in themselves the things and the agreements that are experienced and verified but rather to reveal or discover them to us. It is we the perceiving subjects and not they the perceived objects that profit and are changed by that strangest of all relations between an individual and his environment, the relation which we variously denominate "awareness of," "consciousness of," or "experiencing."

There was a final charge that was sometimes brought by the pragmatists which made us peculiarly and justifiably indignant. This was the charge that, because we held that facts and truths do not depend upon being experienced, we should also hold that experience is *otiose* and makes no difference to the world in which it occurs. In rejecting this imputation of epiphenomenalism (at least as a necessary consequence of his epistemological theory), the realist may point out that consciousness, though not affecting objects in the act of revealing them, can and does change them through the actions of the being to whom they are revealed. Seeing an object enables the seer to adapt himself to it and to its laws, or even to adapt it to himself and to his needs. The light of a lantern does

not directly affect the obstacles in the path of the traveller, but it does affect them indirectly by enabling the traveller to remove them. Thus and thus only are objects affected by our experience of them.

From this section (and the one preceding) it will be seen that the epistemological controversy was triangular: Idealism, Pragmatism, Realism — each one against the other two. From our realistic viewpoint the idealists were right in holding to the ordinary conception of truth as something absolute and not relative to finite minds, but wrong in their insistence that facts exist ultimately only as items of a single all-embracing experience; while on the other hand the pragmatists were right in holding to a pluralistic world of facts, but wrong in supposing that truth about those facts was relative to and dependent upon the changing and conflicting experiences of verification. In matters of ethics, however, the pragmatists were usually on the side of the angels. And as we were all utilitarians we approved of their making *value* relative to the needs and satisfactions of individuals while regretting that they should fail to see the contrast in this respect between value and truth. When the same proposition seems true to one man and false to another, *one* of the men must be *wrong*; but when one and the same thing is felt as a good to one man and as an evil to another, *both* of the men can be *right*. One man's meat can be another man's poison.

## XII. CRITICAL REALISM

In or about the year 1920 a second group of American philosophers decided to write a co-operative book in the interest of a realistic epistemology. The group was composed of George Santayana, formerly at Harvard, C. A. Strong, formerly at Columbia, A. K. Rogers, formerly at Yale, A. O. Lovejoy, at Johns Hopkins, R. W. Sellars at Michigan, J. B. Pratt at Williams, and Durant Drake at Vassar. They called themselves Critical Realists and entitled their book *Essays in Critical Realism*. They regarded our New Realism, with its attempt to interpret existent objects as directly presented to the mind

(rather than as indirectly represented through images or copies), as a form of Naïve Realism — (which indeed it was), and they chose the word "Critical" as suitably antithetic to the "Naïveness" of which we their predecessors had been guilty.

As in the earlier group of six, so also in this later group of seven the members combined agreement in epistemology with disagreement in metaphysics. Rogers was a skeptic, though with naturalistic tendencies. He had, however, been trained in idealism, and his realism was mellowed by a rich historical scholarship and an unusual tolerance of mind. Strong, Drake, and Sellars were all definitely naturalistic, though Strong supplemented his naturalism with a kind of panpsychism in which Drake followed him, while Sellars supplemented his with an enthusiasm for Emergent Evolution. Lovejoy and Pratt were dualists in psycho-physics as well as in epistemology, and constituted the Right Wing of the movement. Lovejoy put especial emphasis on the significance of *time* as affecting all aspects of nature and mind, and christened his philosophy Temporalism. His pet aversions were Behaviorism and Objective Relativism, and against them he waged unremitting dialectical war, always urbane but devastatingly effective. Even further to the Right than Lovejoy and nearer than any of the others to a metaphysical spiritualism was Pratt, who combined a first-hand knowledge of the mystical idealisms of India with a strong sympathy for Christian theism. As for Santayana, his rich and many-sided philosophy is known to everybody. At least as naturalistic as Sellars, Strong, and Drake, he combined with his naturalism and materialistic epiphenomenalism a Platonic realism more completely and consistently worked out than in any previous philosophy. This blend of a materialistic conception of the realm of *existence* with a Platonic conception of the realm of *essence* from which all things derive their meanings and their values, but not their destiny, has always seemed to me (second only to Bergson's) the most challenging and instructive of modern visions. Even to one who, like the writer, is unable to share San-

rayana's pessimistic belief in the *causal impotence* of Platonic forms, it is a great thing to have that vast encompassing realm of essence or subsistence depicted in its purity and completeness and freed from irrelevant entanglements with the subjectivistic theories of knowledge and the teleological theories of nature which have traditionally obscured both its meaning and its beauty.

When one turns from the original and richly varying metaphysical affiliations of the Critical Realists to the bare nucleus of epistemological doctrine on which they were all agreed and which constitutes the definition of Critical Realism itself, I am myself unable to see anything that is either rich or original. The theory may be true, but it certainly is not new. It is indeed nothing but a restatement of the Epistemological Dualism which is explicit in Locke and Descartes and implicit in Hobbes, Spinoza, and the other modern philosophers prior to Berkeley.

This dualistic epistemology is very simple and clear. Its tenets are the following:

1. The world is composed of at least two sets of entities. (*a*) material things; and (*b*) mental states or ideas.
2. The ideas alone are given or presented as objects in consciousness and in that sense are *immediately* known, while the material things are only *mediately* known, being inferred as the direct or indirect causes of the ideas.
3. The inferred material objects are always numerically or existentially non-identical with the immediately presented objects or ideas from which they are inferred; and they are furthermore at least partially different in kind or nature from the latter.

From this point on, epistemological dualists differ from one another. Some of them, for example Descartes and Locke, hold that the ideas inhere in a mental substance or spirit; others, for example Hobbes and Spinoza, hold that the ideas do not inhere in a non-material substance, but that they are phantasms or inner aspects of the body or of the substance of which the body is the outer aspect. But it is important to realize that the question of whether the mind is numerically identical or numerically non-identical with the brain is a psycho-physical or meta-

physical question that has no direct bearing upon the epistemological question of the relation of ideas to the material objects that are inferred as their causes. In other words, the alleged epistemological duality of internal ideas and external objects is not aggravated by supplementing it with the psycho-physical dualism of Descartes, nor is it mitigated by supplementing it with the psycho-physical monism of Hobbes or of Spinoza.

On the epistemological dualism which has just been summarily expounded, there are two preliminary comments which can be made without prejudgment of the question of its ultimate validity or invalidity. First, the theory seems to account simply and clearly for the illusions and aberrations of sensory experience and for what is generally assumed as to the physical and physiological processes that condition our awareness of events distant from us in space and time. Second, the theory seems to be as weak in accounting for truth as it is strong in accounting for error. If our experience affords direct access only to the internal realm of one's own mental states, by what magic can we jump out of our skins and infer or construct that external realm of material objects in which we undoubtedly do believe? If we emphasize the inaccessibility of an external world, we are led to scepticism, for we must doubt the extent to which that world which we can never experience can be proved to resemble the world that we can experience. In fact, we must be doubtful not only as to the nature of the external world but even as to whether it can be shown to exist at all. On the other hand, if instead of concentrating on the numerical otherness of the external world, the epistemological dualist attends to the assumed qualitative likeness of that world to the world of his experience, then he is led not to scepticism but to idealism; for the world that he believes in and that he has alleged to be external now turns out to be an extension and elaboration of his world of ideas.

These two comments that I have just made briefly have been made at length and in detail by the whole history of philosophy subsequent to Locke.

Now what, if anything, have the Critical

Realists done to mitigate the two sad dialectical sequels to epistemological dualism with which our philosophic tradition has made us familiar?

So far as I can see, their contributions to epistemology are mainly confined to a refutation of the *monistic objectivism* of the New Realists and to a restatement in slightly different form of the dualistic or representative theory of perception. In the matter of refutation the most effective work, in my opinion, was done (1) by Drake in his arguments against any form of simple or absolute objectivism; and (2) by Lovejoy in his careful and extensive analysis of the fallacies of the relativistic objectivism of Whitehead, Russell, and the "Logical Positivists."

In the matter of restating the theory of dualistic realism, Santayana is the only member of the group whose thought makes any claim to an advance beyond the position of Locke and Descartes. Yet even in the case of Santayana, whose work in metaphysics is of such enduring value, I can find nothing of real novelty for the epistemological problem. To say that the object of awareness is always an "essence," and that one and the same essence can be exemplified both in subjective experience and in objective nature, does at first sight appear to bridge the traditional gulf between the internal realm of mental states and the external realm of material things. But this appearance of novelty in thought is, I fear, due entirely to a novelty in language — the language of Platonism being employed to describe a situation that is ordinarily described in the language of Nominalism.

To illustrate the way in which the two languages can be used with equal propriety to describe one and the same situation, let us take the classic example of Tweedledum and Tweedledee. Here are two numerically or existentially separate individuals who are, however, in quality, kind, or essence, exactly the same. If we are in a nominalistic mood and desire to emphasize their existential duality rather than their qualitative sameness, we shall characterize them as "two different individuals, Dum and Dee, who happen to be perfectly similar in respect to their *Twee-*

*dleness*." If, on the other hand, we are in a Platonic mood and desire to emphasize their qualitative sameness at the expense of their existential duality, we can characterize them as "a case in which one identical essence of *Tweedleness* happens to be exemplified or actualized twice, once in *Dum* and once in *Dee*." But it is easy to see that the two characterizations are merely different verbal formulae equally applicable to one and the same situation. For suppose that only one of the twins were given in experience; then the other could not be inferred with any more validity by calling him "a second exemplification of the very essence that is experienced" than by calling him "a second individual exactly similar to the one that is experienced." Now if for Tweedledum and Tweedledee we substitute respectively *ideas that are internal and given as mental states and physical objects that are external and inferred as being similar to the ideas in all or some of their properties*, we don't bridge the gap between the given and the inferred by replacing the Lockian "*similarity of mental and physical things*" with the Santayanian "*mental and physical exemplifications of the same essence*."

I should regard the analysis just given as too obvious to call for statement were it not for the fact that I believe that the Critical Realists labor under the delusion that quite apart from Santayana's Platonic *ontology*, the description of the exclusively internal objects of consciousness as "essences" works in a mysterious way to bridge the epistemological gap between mental states and the material things inferred from them, and thus constitutes a real advance beyond the traditional dualistic epistemology of Locke and Descartes. That such is not the case is (ironically enough) nowhere more clearly brought out than by Santayana himself, who quite frankly deduces a conclusion of pure scepticism from his own epistemology. For he tells us that the hypothesis that external things as the causes and correspondents of our ideas do exist cannot at all be proved even with probability. We *believe* that they exist on the basis of "animal faith," which is the completely non-rational but biologically necessary instinct to regard our private

mental states as symbolic of a public material nature. No actual sceptic, so far as I know, has claimed to disbelieve in an objective world. Scepticism is not a denial of belief, but rather a denial of rational grounds for belief. Santayana's picturesque name of "animal faith" does not in any way differentiate his position from that of Hume or other sceptics who have bowed to the inevitable fact that our basic practical attitudes toward the world are psychologically founded upon instinct rather than logically grounded on reason.

### XIII. THE INFLUENCE OF AMERICAN REALISM ON AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY

My story of Realism in America, sketchy and inadequate though it be, is already far too long. I shall conclude it with two comments of a nature and temper more cheerful than my mainly destructive analyses of the arguments of both the New and the Critical Realists might seem to warrant.

First, then, for our comfort let us remember that *unproven is not disproven*.<sup>1</sup> Grant that I have been right in arguing that New Realism in its eagerness to *bridge the gap* between the mind and its physical world has by its theory of Objective Relativism degraded the pure members of that world to an unseemly parity with the objects of error and fantasy, while at the same time, by its theory of Behaviorism, it has degraded the mind itself to a mass of "specific responses." Grant also that I have been right in arguing that Critical Realism has revived an old puzzle rather than contributed a new solution of it, and that in its eagerness to *preserve the gap* between the undisciplined hordes of mutually incompatible ideas and the single self-consistent system of univalent material entities it has made that gap as hopelessly unbridgeable as it was in the earlier dualistic realism of Locke and Descartes. Grant me both of these negative appraisals of the two schools of American Realism and I can still say that the object of their joint devotion: viz. a physical world existing independently of the minds that inhabit it and use it, remains inviolate at least as an object of faith if not as an object

of proof. And that "faith," which as Santayana has said is necessary to the life of animals, may be also necessary to the growth and health of philosophy.

Certain it is that both of the recent movements of realism, whatever the validity of their arguments, have brought a new and more invigorating atmosphere to American philosophy — and this is the second and last of my concluding comments.

Prior to the advent of the New Realism, academic philosophy was curiously out of touch with common sense, with science and even with religion. The usual tenor of a course in "Introduction to Philosophy" was to convince students in the first place that Berkeley's conception of the physical world was essential to philosophic truth, and in the second place that it was a kind of truth which, when accepted, made no essential difference to any particular belief. The net result of such teaching was the impression that philosophy was a combination of the paradoxical and the unimportant. As for science, its working categories and great discoveries were all too often belittled as "vicious abstractions from the organic unity of experience." Philosophers as such (with the notable exception of Josiah Royce) regarded themselves as under no obligation to acquaint themselves with what experts in various departments were finding out about the universe. Finally, as to religion the attitude of the professors alternated between a condescending neglect of it as a crude embryonic form of real philosophy and an idealistic defense of it that gave an all too easy assurance of God, Freedom, and Immortality based not on a study of the universe and its history but on a dialectical analysis of the problem of epistemology.

Thanks to Realism and also to Pragmatism, these thin manners of philosophy in the colleges have changed to something thicker and better. The teaching of metaphysics and ethics today is much more relevantly related to the natural and social sciences. And finally, the basic beliefs of religion are analyzed more often in terms of their connection with what is known about physical

<sup>1</sup> The sections containing his criticisms of neo-Realism have been omitted from this section.

nature and human history than in terms of idealistic platitudes, with the result that on the one hand the values and the dangers of the church as a social institution are better understood, and on the other hand Theism itself is seen as an exciting and momentous hypothesis rather than as either a dialectical truism or a mere dogma of faith.

In short, to some extent at least there has

come into our speculative thinking a revival of the ancient Ionian attitudes of curiosity as to the specific features of the universe and wonder as to its central mystery. And for this restoration of health to American philosophy the two movements of New and Critical Realism have, I believe, been largely responsible.

# Roy Wood Sellars

(1880- )

ROY WOOD SELLARS was born in Canada and brought up in a pioneer community in Michigan. As a boy his chief pleasures were roaming in the woods and reading, chiefly Carlyle and Emerson. He graduated from the University of Michigan, and has spent most of his life there as a teacher.

"Realism, Naturalism, and Humanism" was the title which Professor Sellars gave to an autobiographical statement some years ago. That summarizes his major philosophical interests. He has long been concerned with naturalism and has contributed largely to its modern formulation. His interest in religion which persisted as he turned from a supernatural to a humanistic view, was given expression in his *Religion Coming of Age*. The present selection, taken from *Essays in Critical Realism*, reflects his realistic temper of mind.

## KNOWLEDGE AND ITS CATEGORIES<sup>1</sup>

### I. INTRODUCTION

THE close student of contemporary philosophy can have little doubt that the drift is increasingly toward realism. The first principles of the idealism so long dominant in English-speaking countries have been bluntly challenged. To the younger generation, trained in science and sympathetic toward naturalism, it has gradually been borne home that the traditional systems were inadequately founded, that their epistemological principles were seldom clearly formulated and cogently defended. This feeling of an unsatisfactory situation in philosophy must be connected with the marked increase in all the sciences of a reflective attention to axioms and methods.

Impressionism must give way to methodical analysis. What is desirable in philosophy at present is a fresh start of a systematic and co-operative kind in the light of such knowledge of nature and of man as is practically assured.

It is not the intention of the present paper to make a systematic attack upon idealism. Criticism of idealism will be quite incidental to the main purpose — the presentation of the critical realist's view of knowledge.

While both common sense and science are admittedly realistic in their outlook, the working out of an adequate realism has discovered itself to be no easy task. The first wave of realism busied itself with an attack upon subjective idealism or mentalism.

<sup>1</sup> *Essays in Critical Realism*, pp. 187-203, 217-19. New York, 1920. Reprinted with the permission of the author.

Thrusting aside other motives and angles of approach, it concentrated upon a denial of the Berkeleian principle that *to be is to be perceived*. This selection was an excellent bit of strategy. The objective idealism of the time was like the great Boyg, impalpable and invulnerable:

Forward or back, and it's just as far:—  
Out or in and it's just as strait!

But while this first wave of realism got certain results, it tended to narrow the horizon in an almost scholastic fashion. Knowledge was largely identified with perception, and perception itself was interpreted as an *intuition* of non-mental characters. The result was an analysis of knowledge into mental act and non-mental object. I shall try to show that this limitation of knowledge to the apprehension of characters, whether qualities or relations, had disastrous consequences, because it shut the eye to farther reaches and problems.

The second wave of realism developed in America, and largely consisted in an attempt to eliminate the supposed mental act of intuition in favor of a pan-objectivism. As against romanticism a desirable stress was laid upon the validity of analysis. On the psychological side there was a bid for an alliance with behaviorism of the consciousness-fleeing sort. In short, the hypothesis made was that mind, or consciousness, is rightly but a term for a temporary class of entities, which are the same out of this class as in it.

Both these realistic movements, which are usually classed together as neo-realisms, have been confronted with serious objections. With many of these my colleagues have already made the reader familiar, and I shall not go over the ground except where some examination of it is necessary to bring home the principles I wish to enforce.

But is there not another possible line of development, offering more hope of satisfactorily covering all the known facts and distinctions? Let us see.

The first two waves of realism worked on the assumption that *all* knowledge can be only the literal presence in experience and to awareness of the objects known. Histori-

cally, we may say, they started from the positions of Berkeley and Hume. They attacked not the anti-physical realism of these writers so much as their mentalism. The assumption is, then, that the objects of knowledge are what is given or intuited. But what is intuited analyzes into character-complexes. Locke, Berkeley, and Hume were in agreement upon this point, and I see little reason to believe that their conclusions will be reversed.

But is it so certain that the *object* of knowledge is the character-complex of which we are aware? Is not this assumption the primary mistake of the modern development of philosophy? Now, as I understand it, critical realism stands for the reality and significance of another kind of knowledge than that of the intuition of character-complexes — a knowledge which presupposes this givenness of characters as a foundation, and yet goes beyond it in affirming physical existents of which knowledge is possessed.

Critical realism accepts physical realism. Like common sense, it holds to the belief that there are physical things; and, like enlightened common sense, its idea of the physical world is moulded by the conclusions of science. It is a criticism of *naïve* realism, and an attempt to free it from its prepossession that knowledge is, or can be, an intuition of the physical thing itself.

The critical realist is not afraid of being called an "epistemologue"! There are certain reflective problems which he feels to be genuine and unavoidable. These problems concern the nature and conditions of human knowledge. It is of the greatest importance that there be no confusion of epistemology with metaphysics. The distinctions we shall be led to make will be epistemological, not metaphysical, ones. Thus epistemological dualism is entirely different from metaphysical dualism, and has no necessary relation to it. The critic who condemns epistemological dualism for the sins of metaphysical dualism is arguing entirely beside the point.

But what is epistemological dualism? The term needs definition. As a preliminary indication of its meaning, let us contrast it with the epistemological monism of the neo-



realists. For them the datum presented *is* the ultimate reality. The idea is the object. In Berkeleian terminology, the idea is, at the same time that it is an idea, an independent reality which only temporarily enters into an external and non-modifying relation to the individual percipient. If this is epistemological monism, then critical realism is a form of epistemological dualism; it holds that knowledge of objects is mediated by ideas which are *in some sense* distinct from the objects of knowledge. Mere identification, at least, does not meet essential difficulties. It must be remembered that, in the act of knowledge, the idea which gives the content of knowledge (the *esse intentionale* of the scholastics) is other than the object of knowledge. In what sense it is "other than" the object affirmed is obviously one of our problems. We must remember, also, that in the first act of knowledge it is, itself, not an object, though it may become such in a subsequent act. What the critical realist stands for, then, is a more careful analysis of the act of knowledge than has been common. We must appreciate subjectivism and yet be realists.

It is to be regretted that the neo-realists have ignored the possibility of going behind what they call "dualism." It is bad scientific method to leave in the rear a line of reflection which has attracted so many able minds, which seems necessitated by causal facts, and which has the advantage that "it fully accounts for error and illusion." Does the distinction between the content and the object of perception involve a naïve picture theory? May there not be a unique logical identity between them of the sort knowledge requires? May not data possess cognitive value and be so used in the act of knowledge? The fault with representative perception was that it did not analyze the act of knowledge justly. It was not much more than a clumsy breaking loose from naïve realism. It did not assign with delicate exactness the status of the various factors.

## II. THE NATURE OF KNOWLEDGE

The very existence of epistemology as a reflective science proves that the nature and the conditions of knowledge have become

problems. For good and sufficient reasons the unsystematic and relatively uncritical outlook of common sense has ceased completely to satisfy, while the various special sciences have very naturally ignored all general queries which could not be allotted to their fields of investigation and be met by their methods. Two of the reasons why epistemology forces itself on the thinker may be indicated: (1) the increasing realization that the content of perception is a function of many conditions and that these conditions find their focus in the organism; and (2) the association of adequate knowledge with science.

The first reason leads to a serious doubt whether it is possible to intuit physical things in the immediate and facile way that common sense tends to suppose. May it not be that these sensible characters which are open to inspection and so readily taken to be literal aspects, surfaces, and inherent qualities of physical things are subjective substitutes for the corresponding parts of the physical world? Such substitutes would be of assistance to us in our pressing need to adapt ourselves to our environment, and, at the same time, would easily pass current to our minds as the actual physical things to which we were reacting and adjusting ourselves. Common sense makes no distinctions not forced upon it.

The second reason bears witness to the increasing prestige of science. If you would really know the world, it is felt you should find out what science has to say about it. Yet how different the tale told by science from this parti-colored landscape of sensible things which presents itself to the percipient! A more than Copernican revolution has occurred to startle the reflective mind loose from common-sense realism. And yet science has no peculiar admission to a hidden source of intuition. Its data and methods are open to all who care to investigate them.

I do not think there can be any question that science works upon the assumption that there are physical realities and processes external to the percipient organism, and that these assist in the rise in the organism of subjective data which are the raw material

of scientific knowledge. It is thus in partial conflict with the outlook of practical life in which we think of ourselves as *noting* things outside of us. In the one case, the causal direction from the physical thing to the organism is stressed; in the other, the act of attending, of being interested in things, is uppermost. The physical thing is largely identified with the datum of awareness, and over against it is put the active complex of bodily adjustment and felt interest. I shall try to show that this duality in consciousness is quite harmonizable with the assumption of science as soon as we relinquish naïve realism.

Now, Locke tried to work out the implications of the science of his day. Hence he turned his back upon naïve realism. He was the avowed champion of what Reid later called "the ideal system," that is, the conviction that the individual apprehends only his ideas. I am here concerned only with the skeleton of Locke's theory. "It is evident," he writes, "the mind knows not things immediately, but only by the intervention of the ideas it has of them." Thus he affirms a substitutional process in the place of a direct intuition of the physical world. What we apprehend is the mental content which arises in the mind as a result of the action of stimuli upon the sense-organs. But this thesis should have been only a beginning. It was primarily a study of the conditions of knowledge, not of its nature. It is well known how Locke wavered in his conception of knowledge, making it consist sometimes in a copy of extra-mental objects, sometimes in the agreement of ideas. Locke neglected to carry through a thorough analysis of the knowledge-claim.

The problem before Locke in his realistic mood was as follows: If knowledge of the physical world is somehow mediate, since it cannot be a bare glimpse of the physical world in its own realm of being, how shall we conceive the factors of this knowledge? Here, as I understand it, Locke's scholastic inheritance entered, and encouraged him to assume that primary qualities were *like* the *forms* inherent in material substance. But has epistemology the right to begin with a

system of metaphysics in this fashion? And we should bear in mind the undeniable fact that modern thought has become sceptical of the substance-quality schema of the past.

Berkeley attacked all the weak joints of Locke's armor. What does it mean to assert that an unknowable substance supports qualities? And, again, if primary qualities are existentially real entities, how can mental ideas be like them? The stress is here laid upon a disparateness of essence. Something mental cannot be *like* something non-mental. Metaphysical dualism once more gets in the path of epistemology to confuse it.

It is evident that the epistemologist's aim should be, first, an analysis of the knowledge-claim, and, second, an interpretation of this claim in the light of all the relevant facts.

Lockian realism played into the hands of metaphysical dualism because it assumed that we first know our ideas as objects, and then postulate physical realities which can be known only so far as they resemble the primary objects of knowledge. We shall make a different beginning. We shall point out that we claim, from the first, to *know* physical objects, and that we admit, as a result of reflection, that we *intuit* only contents. In other words, knowledge and intuition are at first fused and identified; only as reflection proceeds is the givenness of content distinguished from knowledge and regarded as an instrument of knowledge.

The usual criticism of Lockian realism is interrogatory: How can you know physical things if your primary knowledge terminates upon mental objects? You cannot get at the physical things to compare them with your ideas. You assert that ideas are mental substitutes; but that is a matter of faith. And, besides, is it very likely that mental objects can be satisfactory substitutes for non-mental realities? The critical realist points out the mixture of validity and invalidity in these questions. His main contention is that the knowledge-situation and claim is ignored and falsified. Ideas are made too substantial and cease to be thought of as contents in terms of which we interpret objects of knowledge. The directness of knowledge is lost sight of. While knowledge is

mediate both in the sense that it is not intuition and in the sense that there is much constructive activity at work in the mind, it is yet direct. We mean independent objects and we interpret these objects in terms of ideas. The fact that we can dwell upon ideas for their own sake should not be allowed to confuse us with respect to the knowledge-claim.

We have tried to make the knowledge-claim explicit and to distinguish between knowledge and the presence of contents. We have pointed out that the presence of contents is simply a necessary factor in knowledge. Because they have not sufficiently analyzed the act of knowledge as reflection makes it explicit, the neo-realists dismiss what they call dualism in the following manner: "The only external world is one that we can never experience, the only world that we can have any experience of is the internal world of ideas. When we attempt to justify the situation by appealing to inference as the guarantee of this unexperienceable externality, we are met by the difficulty that the world we *infer* can only be made up of mental pictures in new combinations." Now, I think that it is clear that these thinkers assume that the assertion of the physical world as the object of knowledge must be based on an inference if you are not a naïve realist. The critical realist denies this assumption. The reasons for a belief in the physical world can be given to back up our instinctive assertion of it, but the critical realist is primarily only developing the act of knowledge. The distinction between the self and the external world has a genetic foundation. In the second place, the neo-realist does not distinguish between intuition and knowledge. The much-abused and ambiguous term "experience" is employed as a blanket to cover every type of what may indiscriminately be called knowledge. Suppose that we introduce more exact terms as follows: "The physical realm is one that we can never intuit, as common sense tends to suppose; the only realm we can intuit is the realm of data." But because we cannot intuit the physical realm it does not follow either that we cannot know it or that we must infer it.

If reflection convinces us that we cannot intuit the physical thing but that what is given is a character-complex, it is nonsense to continue to try to intuit the physical world. We should try to analyze our experience more fully, to see whether knowledge is necessarily the same as intuition or the awareness of content. Now, the critical realist holds that we must distinguish between the givenness of content and knowledge of the physical thing, and that we do not *infer* a realm of existence co-real with ourselves but, instead, *affirm* it through the very pressure and suggestion of our experience. A genetic approach is quite essential to philosophy. Instead, then, of saying that "the world we *infer* can only be made up of the matter of experience, that is, can only be made up of mental pictures in new combinations," we should say "the world we *affirm* can only be known in terms of the characters given in experience." In short, contents are given or intuited, while objects are known.

Let us now see whether we can explain why nearly all realists have assumed that knowledge is some sort of an intuition of the physical existent known. That naïve realists tend to such a position would, I believe, be granted by all. Even M. Bergson desires a penetrative intuition of the object in which the subject and the object somehow merge. That this desire and tendency has led to the shipwreck of much epistemology has, for some time now, been my firm conviction. It has led to the confusion of datum and object.

The truth is that reflection begins within the setting of common-sense realism, the outlook upon the world built around perception. That the individual's field of experience has a certain structure, and is shot through with meanings and affirmations, is a matter of undeniable fact. I open my eyes and perceive concrete *things*. What are concrete things? *They are not merely character-complexes*. They are co-reals to be adjusted to, independent, common, and full of various capacities. We have here the practical category of thinghood, to which epistemology has not done justice. Perceived things are co-real with the perceiver, and independent of him in exactly

the same way and to the same degree that they are independent of one another.

It is pretty clear, then, that there are two elements in perception: *the affirmation of a co-real and the assigned set of characters or aspects*. Suppose we call these, respectively, the object of perception and the content of perception. The content is intuited; the object is reacted to and affirmed.

When we perceive another individual perceiving, the situation is clear. The percipient organism attends to its object. We can see the focusing of the eyes, the tension of the head, the directive set of the whole body, all leading usually to behavior toward the object. The psychologist knows that the instincts and interests of the organism are aroused, and are finding expression in this behavior.

But internally, or in the percipient himself, we have the content of perception, and, over against it in a qualifying way, the motor complex of adjustment combined with the realistic meanings and expectations which are characteristic of perception. Thinghood and perception go together. It is the refusal to recognize this fact and the attempt to thin perception down to the content intuited that constitutes the chief error of much of contemporary thought.

We may put our result in the following way. No motive has entered to cause us to doubt the existence of a physical realm co-existent with the percipient; but reflection has discovered that the content with which we automatically clothe these acknowledged realities is subjective. But let it be noted that neither subjective idealism nor agnosticism is justified by this development. And it is to be hoped that philosophy has got beyond the habit of jumping to hasty conclusions. What is needed is a patient and persistent analysis, which is able to go forward step by step while doing justice to the structure and meanings of the individual's experience. The facts which break down naïve realism work within the realistic set of affirmations. Hence it is illogical to infer subjective idealism from them. On the other hand, only if knowledge must be an intuition of the physical existent is agnosticism im-

plied. But what right has a thinker to make such a tremendous assumption? If the facts indicate that we cannot intuit the physical thing perceived, it is far more probable that knowledge is not an intuition than that we do not possess knowledge. The nature of knowledge has simply become a reflective problem.

It has often been the tendency in epistemology to regard the contrast between perception and conception as basic. We now see that the contrast between intuition and a non-intuitional interpretation of knowledge is profounder. What kind of knowledge does man actually possess? I am at present concerned with knowledge of the physical world through external sense-perception. We shall consider knowledge of other kinds of reality (other at least as ordinarily interpreted) afterward.

The factors of knowledge are now apparent: (1) the affirmation of an object or ideatum; (2) the idea or content given to the knowing self; and (3) the interpretation of the first in terms of the second. To these three on the subjective side, there must correspond the affirmed existent with its determinate nature on the objective side. The interpretation of the object may be of the almost automatic sort characteristic of perception, or it may be of the more conscious sort found in science.

Thus, when the knowledge-situation is made explicit, we realize that the object must be known in terms of the content which is given to the knowing self. In the act of knowledge, the content has a different status from the object, and yet is in some sense assigned to it. We are compelled to think the object as it is presented to us in the content. Of course, we can be as critical as we please in our construction of the idea which seems to us satisfactorily to give the object; but, after due selection and supplementation, the judged idea is accepted as revealing the object.

Yet we must probe deeper. What is the fundamental postulate of knowledge? It is the cognitive value of the idea. The content in terms of which we think the object must have the property of reproducing the character of the object in some measure. This identification of content and object is made

automatically in perception. The book which I perceive *is* oblong, blue in color, fairly heavy, etc. Thus the postulate of knowledge has its foundation in our instinctive assignments, and critical judgment only continues what has thus been begun. To know an object is to assign a content to an object, to think the object's nature in terms of the given content. There must, as we have said, be something reproducible about the object if it is to be known. Only to the extent that this is so can the idea give the grasp on the nature of reality that knowledge seems to postulate. But we need have no *a priori* theory as to what idea and object have in common. Assuredly, there is no need to postulate an objective form distinct from matter in the Aristotelian sense. All that the postulate of knowledge seems to me unequivocally to demand is that the object have a structure and relations and powers which can be revealed in the content of the idea.

In the foregoing, I have tried to analyze and bring together three topics for investigation — viz. the act of knowledge, the nature of knowledge, and the conditions of knowledge. Critical realism differs from naïve realism in its denial that the physical thing is intuited. Knowledge for it involves the distinction between the content and the object of knowledge. Yet it agrees with naïve realism in its belief that the physical thing is the direct object of knowledge. It is critical realism in that it appreciates the nature of knowledge more critically in the light of the act of knowledge and of the actual conditions of human knowledge. While, properly speaking, there is no trace of subjective idealism in critical realism, it does justice to that play of mental activity that modern logic and psychology stress. It is synoptic in a way that other epistemological systems cannot claim to be.

Let us now see whether we can make clearer the mistake in traditional representative realism. The copy-theory is essentially a thwarted naïve realism. When the conditions of knowledge force a thinker to admit that it is impossible to intuit the physical thing, the natural first tendency is to say that

the percipient intuits a mental object which is *like* the postulated physical object. Obviously, there is in this compromise no adequate reinterpretation of the act of knowledge. Hence, the mental object comes between the mind and the real object as something upon which knowledge verily terminates. The hypothesis of similarity between physical reality and mental object is something additional to knowledge. Scepticism can thus enter very readily.

The temptation to representative perception is due to the automatic formation of the practical category of thinghood. The clothing of the external object in perceptual content leads to the view that physical things have sensible surfaces and sensible qualities. It is then difficult for the thinker to shake himself loose from this way of thinking of the physical world. Yet it leads to the sort of scholastic metaphysics that led Locke astray. His substance, with its inherent primary qualities, is but the ghost of the intuited physical thing of common sense.

It may be of interest in this connection to interpret Berkeley's arguments. The important fact is that we can accept the majority of his points against Locke and still be physical realists. He did not do justice to the total experience of perception. It is, in fact, only recently that psychologists have begun to do so. Of course, we should not hold that the physical world is inert just because there is no visible activity in the content of perception. Since we do not intuit the physical thing, we should not expect to intuit its activity or lack of activity. It should be clear by now that epistemology has its metaphysical implications in this sense, at least, that a naïve view of knowledge involves a naïve view of the object of knowledge.

The conception of knowledge which we have been suggesting can now be more precisely stated and defended. Knowledge is just the insight into the nature of the object that is made possible by the contents which reflect it in consciousness. Naïve realism makes the impossible claim to intuit the object impossible because it would involve the leaping of spatial and temporal barriers in an

unnatural fashion. Critical realism, on the other hand, is satisfied to admit the fact of causal mediation while yet proclaiming that the object affirmed and intended is known in terms of the content presented to the knowing self. The content has cognitive value. I believe that this is what my colleagues mean when they assert that (in so far as knowledge is accurate) the content given is the essence of the object. It is a way of saying that the content is relevant to the object, that it has a sort of revelatory identity with the object, that it contains its structure, position, and changes. The situation is so basic that it can hardly be further reduced. The content of knowledge offers us the fundamental categories, such as time, space, structure, relations, and behavior, in terms of which we think the world. To postulate the validity of these categories is *ipso facto* to assert that knowledge-content gives us the constitution of the world. There is, of course, no sharp break between perception and propositional knowledge, for propositional knowledge is based upon perception, to which it must remain responsible. Scientific knowledge is clearly only a more explicit, more critical, and more developed form of knowledge than perception. Its conception of nature is based upon tested and interpreted data to the obtaining of which all the mental ingenuity of the ablest of men has been directed. The study of such knowledge is primarily the affair of logic, though there is and should be no conflict with the findings of psychology.

I am aware that the first reaction of the reader may be that of dissatisfaction with this interpretation of knowledge. There is the desire to intuit, and somehow to handle mentally the very stuff of the physical existent. The illusion nourished by the fusion of content and object in the outlook of common sense is so deep-rooted that it is at first hard to overcome. To know a thing is easily thought of as having the very independent existent itself open to an immediate and penetrative inspection. But the instruments to such an inspection are not possessed by the human organism. The more one reflects upon the situation, the more one realizes that the mind is not a searchlight, and that

the self does not possess an "eye" which has the power of bringing it into contact with the surfaces of things in a ghostly fashion. By its very origin and locus, human knowledge cannot contain the material of the object. Yet it does not fail to be knowledge because it is not what knowledge cannot be. To condemn knowledge because it is not something else which we mistakenly desire is unreasonable. Let the critic explain what he means by knowledge, what his ideal of knowledge is. It will, I believe, be found extremely vague or else unharmonizable with the actual conditions of human knowledge. This to the realist; the idealist really relinquishes the object of knowledge and satisfies himself with the content.

We have no good reason to regard the datum as arbitrary — quite the contrary, in fact. If, under apparently the same conditions, the content of perception changed in a capricious way, it would be impossible to regard it as material which could mediate knowledge of the object. But experience indicates an actual, causally based agreement between the physical existent perceived and the content of perception. One flower is white and small, another is blue and large, etc. These differences in content are rightly taken by all to point to differences in the physical objects.

But what is the exact nature of this agreement? We must realize by now that no merely dialectical answer will do justice to the problem. The total psychophysical situation must be appreciated. A determinate existent is the object of the percipient organism's attention, and so controls the rise of the content of which the self is conscious and which it assigns to the existent as an external object. The nature of the existent must be co-related with the datum aroused and assigned. Neither the content nor its assignment can be arbitrary if the demand of knowledge is to be satisfied; for does not knowledge imply some sort of revelation of the very constitution of the object known? Now, the whole psychophysical setting of perception seems to me to guarantee that agreement between datum and object which makes it possible in the knowledge-claim to impute the

datum to the object and to think the object in terms of the content of thought. The more critically this identification is made, the less of error there will, of course, be in our knowledge.

We can conclude that the physical world reveals itself in the data of observation. This revelation is causally mediated and is furthered by mental operations. Just because man is an individual, he cannot expect to be in a more direct cognitive relation than this to other things. In the next section we shall discuss more fully the exact meaning of these terms — revelation, identification, and cognitive relation. The problem arises from the recognition that in knowledge we claim to grasp reality in some measure, and yet that we cannot intuit it.

It may not be amiss to call attention to the psychological fact that the content of perception is the summation of much interpretation and synthesis. The psychophysical organism has in this way enlarged and perfected the agreement between the subjective datum and the object of perception. This fact brings home to us the necessary realization that the causal foundation works within a non-mechanical medium. The stimulus is taken up and supplemented by mental operations. The shifting of attention from one part of the object to another part, the institution of comparison, the supplementation of eye by hand, all these assist in the forthcoming of fuller agreement.

Scientific knowledge requires additional methods and a finer technique. Yet there is at its basis nothing different in nature from that which we have noted in perception. The logic of science emphasizes the critical interplay of data of observation and theory. Ideas and methods become objects of reflection.

This setting and tested responsibility of the knowledge-content allow us to claim a genuine conformity between it and the physical existents known, a conformity which justifies the thought of the existent in terms of the content. The situation is, of course, unique, and metaphors will not much help us. The knower is confined to the datum, and can never literally inspect the existent

which he affirms and claims to know. Penetrative intuition of the physical world is impossible just because we humans are what we are, organisms stimulated by external things. Knowledge rests upon the use of data as revelations of objects because of what may, I think, be rightly called a logical identity between them. No term can, however, be a substitute for an appreciation of the actual situation. Physical being is determinate, and knowledge-content is a function of factors so connected therewith that it reflects it and has cognitive value with respect to it.

#### IV. THE GRASP OF KNOWLEDGE

The position at which we have arrived is realistic, and is as near natural realism as the conditions of knowledge permit. Physical things are the objects of knowledge, though they can be known only in terms of the data which they control within us. The postulate of knowledge is the cognitive or revelatory value of the idea taken as a content or character-complex and not as a mental existent. In other words, the content which we apprehend must have the property of reproducing something about the object, of conveying in its own medium the form of the object.

But a word like "form" is not a sufficient answer to the inevitable demand concerning the grasp of knowledge. Let me therefore explain what this term means to me. In the first place, I see no need to postulate a metaphysical dualism between form and matter. Matter is just as much of an abstraction as form. Reality is formed matter. Reality has structure and organization. It has a determinate nature. It is for this reason that our categories such as space, time, structure, and causality have validity. To the extent that Aristotelianism and scholasticism separated matter and form they were guilty of a vicious and unnecessary dualism. It is reality that is active and the seat of processes, not a form or a matter.

But if the object of knowledge is a formed matter, the question may next be raised, what about the object can be conveyed to mind? Obviously not the being but the "form." To convey the being is impossible,

for the thing must remain outside the knowing mind. To know the thing is therefore not to be the thing. Nor is to know the thing to have a copy-like reproduction of the thing. What, then, is knowledge? It is the recognized possession by the mind of the "form" of the thing, that is, its position, size, structure, causal capacities, etc. It is the mediated grasp of those features of the thing which are reproducible. To know these is to know the thing.

But just because these features of the thing are alone grasped, there is the danger, on the one hand, of identifying reality with form, and on the other hand, of making reality unknowable, because only its form can be grasped. The proper limitations of knowledge are not realized. Critical realism is not agnostic, because it does not begin, as agnosticism usually does, with an unexamined notion of knowledge. It maintains, also, that reality, itself, is the object of human knowledge.

But there is another approach to the nature of reality with which I have very little concerned myself. I have felt it wiser to concentrate upon the problem of the knowledge of the physical world gained through external perception; for, until some agreement is reached upon this point, it seems difficult to travel far along other lines. And yet the contents of consciousness are real. Do we know the psychical adequately? Is the psychical an integral part of the pulse of the functioning brain, an expression of creative synthesis? Or is it the very stuff of the brain? These questions are fascinating, and indicate the line of investigation which must next be undertaken. But this is neither the time nor the place for this work. I shall be more than satisfied if I have helped to make clearer the nature and conditions of the knowledge of the physical world gained through the data of external perception.



# Frederick J. E. Woodbridge

(1867-1940)

DEAN WOODBRIDGE used to tell his students that when he entered Amherst College as a freshman he met a classmate who had come with a typewriter and a set of the writings of Herbert Spencer, and Dean Woodbridge would add that that machine and set of books were decisive influences in his life. At Amherst he came under the influence of Professor Garman, and he always paid grateful tribute to his first teacher in philosophy. He came to Columbia University as a professor in 1902, and for many years was dean of the Graduate School.

To Aristotle, Spinoza, and Locke among the dead, and to Santayana among the living, Dean Woodbridge acknowledged his special indebtedness. Realism and Naturalism were his two strongest interests. Of the former he said that it seemed so important for metaphysics and philosophy that he had been more busy championing than developing it. Though he did not write widely on it he had great influence in its development, constantly encouraging that point of view in the pages of *The Journal of Philosophy*, of which he was the editor for many years. Naturalism was his first concern, and after his retirement he turned again to it for a final formulation. The present article was written in 1911.

## NATURAL TELEOLOGY<sup>1</sup>

THE operations of nature do not appear to be aimless changes. They issue in specific products the history of which can be traced and construed as the adaption of means to ends. It is, doubtless, this aspect of nature as the producer of definite and particular results which, more than any other, profoundly stirs the imagination and provokes scientific curiosity. From of old the coming into being of

things in an ordered world and their passing away has been the theme of both poet and scholar. Reflection, after it has endured disappointment and sophistication, may come to view nature with eyes less fascinated by her productivity, seeing in her nothing but an aimless and ceaseless rearrangement of elements to which chance or a human prejudice in favor of final causes imparts the illusory

<sup>1</sup> *Nature and Mind*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1937. Originally published in a volume entitled *Essays in Modern Theology*. New York, 1911. Reprinted with the permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

appearance of direction; but such is not the spontaneous vision of things. There they are, constituting the great whole we call nature, each of them with its individual history culminating through many helps and hindrances in the present product. Illustrations are so abundant that choice is baffled in selecting the most appropriate. For while living things may at first appear to be more evidently the products of directive and selective forces, inanimate nature itself — the plain with mountains about it, the river with its course motived by the character of the land through which it flows — exhibits likewise the adaptation of means to ends. And the adaptations are admirable, well calculated, the more they are analyzed, to produce the specific results which eventuate. Thus we come to think that we have explained the origin of anything when we are able to view it as the kind of result we should expect from the operation of the factors which have produced it. But this means, of course, that these factors serve. They aid and abet the outcome in definite ways, and will produce it if no obstacles of sufficient contrary influence thwart their natural productivity. Thus individual existence appears to be the outcome of the success of processes which help toward the realization of some specific end over those that hinder this realization. Nature is a domain, not of chaotic changes, but of definite, teleological changes pointing to particular results. In other words, in view of nature's productivity, there are helps and hindrances; things and the elements of things have specific uses.

Philosophy has not always been content to take this fact of specific usefulness as metaphysical, something to be set down as of the nature of things. Explanation has been sought of it and the question asked, Why do things have their uses, and, indeed, their specific uses? In asking this question philosophy has been stimulated by an analogy which has often proved of striking value, the analogy between nature and art. For art, like nature, produces. Its procedure is an adaptation of means to ends. Now, art is controllable and its manner of operating is measurably obvious, while nature is stubborn and ob-

scure. The building of a house is a comparatively simple process for analysis, but the factors which combine to produce a star require long searching for their discovery. To pass from art to nature thus affords knowledge the desired opportunity of passing from the better to the less known. Science has ever availed itself of this opportunity, and by so doing has often attained its most signal achievements. The analogy between nature and art captivates the imagination also and has been no mean instrument in the poet's hands. And it has an obvious bearing on the problem of use. Its record in this respect has, however, been unsatisfactory. Instead of leading to accepted and intelligible opinion, it has led to bitter controversy. Instead of clarifying use, it has, more often, obscured and mystified use. Its procedure is reviewed here, not for the idle purpose of fighting old battles over again, but in the hope of securing fresh emphasis upon the obvious, but often neglected, fact that teleology is natural; that use is something on which to build, not something requiring explanation; that it is a datum in metaphysics.

# I

Art, when consciously productive, evidently intends its products to be useful. A house is made for shelter, clothing for protection or adornment, pictures to delight the sense. The skill of the artist is measured by the success with which he makes his materials serve his chosen end. The finality of art appears, thus, to be an imparted and intended finality. So we find a ready explanation of the usefulness of the things man makes in the intention or design with which he makes them. Asking why the loom so successfully weaves the colored fabric, we get the answer, it was made in order that it might do precisely the thing which we admire. Furthermore, our admiration of the product passes over into even greater admiration of the skill which could contrive a machine so useful. Thus in the products of art we seem to have instances where the explanation of use is obvious. The ease of the explanation readily begets a habit of thinking about use generally, leading us to regard all

uses as designed for the ends they serve. Since the hand is so useful for grasping it may be thought of as made in order to grasp. Since the adaptations of nature grow more wonderful the more they are perceived, nature may be thought of as directed by a skill commensurate with such wonder. The analogy between nature and art thus easily constituted is reinforced by human necessities. For man needs the useful in order that he may live long and well. His life is a struggle for help. Nature, too, appears to struggle and its products, like man himself, fail if help is not attained. Indeed, so profoundly may this analogy between nature and art affect the mind, that it becomes incredible that the uses of nature have any other explanation than in a power great enough and intelligent enough to contrive their manifold adaptations. Thus philosophy is led to explain natural use by design and to see in the varied adaptations of means to ends in nature proof of intelligent direction. Nature becomes thus a work of art.

If this explanation of the uses of things, this thinking of nature as somehow a work of art with its adaptations admirably contrived, does not settle down into an unquestioned faith, it suffers in its satisfactoriness from further reflection. For no work of man's art is so perverse as nature. The spider and the fly have afforded a favorite illustration of this. How admirably adapted is the spider's web for catching flies! But shall we also say, How admirably are flies adapted to be caught! Such a summer's day illustration may provoke a smile at the ease with which philosophy may embrace a hasty conclusion. The tragedies of life, however, the tragedies which arise out of these same adaptations which we have been asked to admire, provoke amazement and leave the mind bewildered. Expected harvests blighted in a night, lives of promise lost through no discoverable fault, even the kindnesses of men turned to cruelty when blame can be lodged at no one's door — these and a multitude of similar instances make nature as a work of art irrational and perverse. Indeed, if philosophy has found it easy to accept the adaptations of nature as evidence of intelligent contrivance, it has

also found it easy to tear that evidence to shreds. Count only the gains, the seed breaking upward towards the life-engendering sun, and the inference to design looks easy; but count the losses also, the frost that kills before the blossom, and the inference is hard. If, when all is considered, belief in design still lingers, it is belief in a design the purposes of which are past finding out, and clearness of philosophical vision gives place to profound bewilderment. Nature, as a work of art, becomes, thus, an inscrutable mystery.

There are other considerations besides nature's perversity which disturb the opinion that use may be explained by intelligent design. The analogy between nature and art may be preserved while the inference to intelligent direction is abandoned. For the products of art often turn out to have uses which the artist neither intended nor suspected. In breaking stones, man discovered fire. In trying to make gold, he found what gold could never buy. But there is no need of striking illustrations, for accidental advantage is one of the commonest attendants of directed activity. Now this fact may be generalized as well as that of intelligent direction, and use be, consequently, explained as an accident, as something which attaches to things not by design or for any ascertainable reason, but, as we are wont to say, by chance. Incredible as such an explanation often appears when first proposed, it grows in credibility as it is steadily contemplated. For, contradictory as it may seem, the appeal to chance tends to become, when attention is focused on the thing that happens, an appeal to necessity. Long ago Democritus noted that the orderly arrangement of the sand, the pebbles, and the stones upon a beach was not due to any designed selection, but was the necessary result of the coincidence of these things and the action of the waves. So, too, while the arrangement of plants in a garden may show the gardener's taste and skill, the distribution of vegetation about the shores of a lake, although no less remarkable in its arrangement, needs no gardener for its explanation; for, again, the fact that water and soil have happened to meet there under cer-

tain natural conditions excludes any other explanation of the resulting order. And it has not been difficult to extend a similar explanation to the marvellous structures and functions of animals. Its apparent incredibility when so extended steadily diminishes with greater familiarity with the facts and with increased experimentation, until it becomes no longer easy — it may, indeed, become impossible — to think of nature as a work of art. Its uses and adaptations appear rather to be accidental, because they simply befall under the conditions which happen to exist in any given case. They appear also to be necessary, because, given these conditions, no other results than the actual appear to have been possible.

The explanation of use by design founded upon the analogy between nature and art finds thus a rival explanation in the contention that use is the outcome of chance and necessity, a rival founded upon the same analogy. The first is a generalization from intended use and the second is a generalization from unintended use. Yet the second has a certain superiority over the first. The perversity of nature, as we have seen, reduces the generalization of design to a mystery, making the purposes of nature inscrutable. But it is just this perversity which the contrasted generalization appears competent to explain. For, if there is no design in nature, but advantage and disadvantage fall out as the conditions happening at the time determine, perversity in nature is something to be expected. Life will be quickened under the sun's grateful warmth, but be destroyed by the sudden frost. As nature works for no hoped for or expected results, its results are simply those that happen. Thus within the limits of their definitions, within the limits, that is, set by the facts from which they are generalizations, the inference to design is inferior to the inference to chance and necessity. Yet the conviction that things must be as they are is a potent means of obscuring what they are, and the appeal to chance is often only a device to end our curiosity. To conclude, therefore, that the teleology of nature has been explained may not, after all, be an exhibition of wisdom.

There lurks in the argument which, in contrast to the argument from design, may be called the argument from chance and necessity, an obscurity regarding what it has really achieved which is seldom sufficiently emphasized. The argument is essentially negative. It insists that there is no valid reason for appealing to design in explaining the adaptations of nature; it points out that these adaptations, when clearly seen, appear to be the natural outcome of the conditions under which they arise; when applied to specific cases, it often succeeds in tracing admirably the history of the adaptations involved. These are admitted services. But it may not claim that use has been explained, that a world of useless things could by chance or by necessity become a world of useful things. Its most ardent supporters would hardly venture to make such a claim. Yet the suggestion of it serves to show the limits within which the argument moves. Chance, that is, can operate to produce adaptation only under conditions where that adaptation is already possible. A variation can turn out to be useful only in an environment where it has a possible use. It would be quite profitless, for example, for an organism to develop eyes in a world where there was nothing to see. Thus chance and necessity can operate to secure adaptation only in a world where things have their specific uses, only in a world already essentially teleological. The uses and adaptations of nature remain, having lost nothing of their teleological character from our efforts to explain them or to explain them away. Nature may not be a work of art. It may not be a work of chance. It is a domain of uses where chance and design may operate, but it is a domain of uses first.

Still the analogy between nature and art may be preserved, but it should now be less ambitiously construed. Art and nature both produce and their products are both useful and instances of the adaptation of means to ends. But in neither case is use itself something produced. Not to be sufficiently conscious of this fact is to run the risk of confusing the analogy and indulging in unwarranted speculations. Art makes useful things and may make them with or without inten-

tion, but it never makes things useful. That fact alone renders the argument from design or from chance logically illegitimate. Since the sun's warmth is grateful, it may be thought of as graciously bestowed. Life would indeed be poor if such a sentiment were forbidden; but sentiment is not reason. It is one thing to call the sun gracious because its effects are grateful, but it is quite a different thing to regard these effects as evidence that the sun acts with a motive. Poetry and science are separated by that difference. It is imperative in science that evidence should be evidence, that the facts cited should be unequivocal in their import. But in the illustration it is clear that the sun's warmth would be grateful even if it were bestowed with malice or with no motive at all. To be sure a generous gift implies a generous giver, but the thing given is not a gift because it has the quality of being generous. It is a gift for other reasons, and no connection is discoverable between these reasons and that quality which warrants an inference from the one to the other. So too with respect to use; if a thing is useful, it is useful irrespective of the causes which produced it, and no connection is discoverable between its use and its causes which warrants an inference from the one to the other. It is not because it is a work of art that a watch is useful; and it is not because the adaptations in nature may be the work of chance that they are useful. The use of anything is, thus, no evidence whatever of the character of its origin. A thing may originate by art or it may originate by chance, but whether it is useful or not is not thereby determined. Since, therefore, there is no ascertained connection between use as use, on the one hand, and chance or design, on the other, the arguments which have been considered lack the kind of evidence required by science. Use is, accordingly, to be set down, not as a product of nature or of art, but as a factor in their productivity. Art and nature are, therefore, alike in this, that in their productions use is discovered and applied.

The argument thus far pursued points to the conclusion that use, when it exists, is not produced, but discovered, that, in the

last analysis, it is an original property of whatever possesses it. Teleology is natural, something to build upon, not something to be explained. There is, as Aristotle insisted long ago, a final factor in every instance of production, and thus a final factor among the factors of evolution. But it may be urged that thus to regard use as natural is not to provide knowledge with a valuable category. It is the business of knowledge, one may claim, to study how things do and may go together. It is causes and not uses which constitute the object of scientific research. To look for them with an eye on use is to rob science of its disinterestedness. For use is detected only as means and ends are distinguished, while causes operate independent of such distinction. If, therefore, it is affirmed that use is a factor in nature's processes, must it not also be affirmed that nature distinguishes between means and ends? And does not this latter affirmation imply that nature, after all, operates intelligently, and so opens the door again to visionary speculation?

But there is no peculiar sanctity attaching to the category of causation, just as there is no peculiar sanctity attaching to any category of thought. Consequently, when it is asserted that nature must operate intelligently if means and ends are to be naturally distinguished, there is a ready retort in the assertion that nature must also operate intelligently if causes and effects are to be naturally distinguished. Yet it is not good philosophy to dismiss an objection simply by pointing out that it shares the difficulty which it raises. For simply to put one's argument and objections to it in the same boat is not to be well assured of a prosperous voyage. Reason may be better served by a consideration of her chart, for her voyage is not arbitrary, nor her port self-chosen. To drop the figure, the mind cannot create the distinctions which it discovers. Were there no causes and effects discoverable in nature, nature would never be construed by the mind in those terms. And the same is true of means and ends. That ends are reached in nature through the utilization of serviceable means is as simple and unsullied a fact of observation as any other. It is not read into the order of things;

and surely disinterested inquiry should not read it out for the irrelevant reason that intelligence is necessary in order to observe it. The sole question to be raised about any category of thought is the extent of its applicability. Now, to claim that the distinction between means and ends is known only when intelligence operates is not the same as to claim that the distinction exists only when intelligence operates. Indeed, as has already been pointed out, there is no discoverable connection between intelligence and use which warrants an inference from the one to the other. The category of use is not, therefore, necessarily limited in its application to the field where intelligence operates. Philosophy is amply justified in supposing that a world of useful things could exist, characterized by the adaptation of means to ends and yet unilluminated throughout its whole extent by the presence of thought. Only, let it be added, such a world would not be our world.

Our world is illumined by thought. By such illumination the distinction between means and ends, together with all other discoverable distinctions, gains in significance. The gain, however, is still natural. It is another instance of natural teleology. For nature produces thinking beings as well as whirling stars. It is, consequently, no more astonishing that men should philosophize than that bodies should fall; that nature, through its products, should operate intelligently than that it should operate unintelligently. There are, doubtless, difficulties in tracing the natural genesis of intelligent beings, but these difficulties are not reasons for concluding that their genesis is not natural. Men are not dropped into the world from without. Nature may, therefore, be said to be intelligent, but the statement should not be rendered absurd by a misuse of the concept of totality. One may speak of nature as a whole if one's intention is to be as inclusive as possible in one's utterances. For nature as a whole is simply nothing left out, but nothing more. As a whole, nature allows no other descriptive predicates. It is simply the domain where predicates are specific in their application. To affirm, therefore, that nature is intelligent is to affirm that among

the total of its specific operations intelligence is to be included. Since nature appears to be intelligent in this sense, since our world is illumined by thought, the distinction between art and nature turns out to be a distinction within nature itself, a distinction between nature as intelligent and nature as unintelligent. It points to a specific instance of the adaptation of means to ends. It is a special case of use. Thus, far from creating the distinction between means and ends, intelligence is one of its most significant illustrations.

In metaphysics, moreover, the category of use would appear to be indispensable. Here, at least, where the aim is to define the factors which enter into existence generally, our view of things is warped by a too exclusive emphasis upon causation. Metaphysics may be limited in the appeal it makes, and our chief business in life may remain the discovery of the quantitative value of the factors which combine to effect any change, but only a mind long habituated to the disregard of all but the quantitative can be content to construe the world generally only in quantitative terms. The quantitative is only so much, and always so much of the concrete and the qualitative, of sugar and salt, of gold and silver, of space and time, of motion and electricity. Furthermore, all our skill is unable to discover any connection between the quantitative value of a cause and the peculiar character of its efficiency. The quantity of food required to sustain life does not resemble the quality of the life sustained. And while we may consider such a generalization as the conservation of energy to be among the triumphs of scientific induction, its value consists, not in rendering the characteristic efficiency of any cause intelligible, but rather in showing that all causes appear to be connected and subject to control. Consequently philosophy can never be satisfied with the attempt to regard the qualitative features of the world as negligible in any effort to construe existence generally. For this purpose the category of causation is inadequate, because it is colorless. Moreover, it is useful only because, in its application, it presupposes the characteristic and qualitative effi-

ciency of the factors with which it deals. To define a world, therefore, solely in terms of the dimensions of energy, is to define another world than ours. The vision of things is only distorted when their qualitative features, their aesthetic character even, are regarded merely as the incidental byplay of factors which have no other law than the equation.

### III

The justification of the category of use has, thus far, been mainly negative. The attempt has been made to show, first, that there is no relevant connection between the fact of teleology and the operations of chance or design; and, secondly, that intelligence may not be regarded as the source of the distinction between means and ends, because it cannot be credited with creating the distinctions it discovers, and because it is itself an instance of teleology. These considerations do not, however, amount to a positive definition. They produce at best a negative conviction and so serve to warn us that teleology is to be reckoned with. But if teleology is natural, how is it to be naturally construed and worked out? This study would be incomplete if no attempt were made to answer the question. For the baffling thing about the distinction between means and ends is that it is a distinction which points toward the future; and to regard an end not yet attained as an efficient factor in producing present changes has never been productive of generally convincing reasoning. Historically the progress of knowledge has often been arrested by some fresh and fascinating appeal to final causes, but knowledge has usually proceeded again unmodified by the appeal except in so far as it has directed attention to new methods of obviating the difficulties it raises. The science of biology is a pertinent illustration of this. Its history is marked by repeated appearances of vitalism in some form, but its great gains have not been made by the use of that hypothesis. There is, thus, in the fact noted, cause for inquiry and caution. The appeal to final causes always commands interest, but it is always regarded with suspicion. The interest appears to be

due to the fact that the appeal forcibly calls attention to the habitual presupposition of finality in tracing the course of any natural process. The suspicion appears to be due to the fact that the appeal insists that what the presupposition involves should be regarded as an efficient factor during the process. The issue thus raised is more of a logical tangle than a question of fact. Its analysis may serve to indicate that a definition of natural teleology must recognize an ultimate diversity in the character of the factors with which we have to deal. Use is always specific use.

The bare statement that the attempt to trace the life history of a given organism is the attempt to follow the movement from its germ to its matured form, is sufficient to indicate that the finality of the movement is presupposed. For the germ is not the germ of an organism in general, but the germ of a particular organism. A kernel of corn is not a grain of wheat. And, to transfer the illustration to the inorganic world, carbon is not oxygen. Consequently, whether we are dealing with elements or with complexes, with dead things or with living things, these factors, if they are to enter into the production of any future result, are never conceived irrespective of the particular part they are to play in that production. Their finality, their serviceableness in the production of definite ends is presupposed. Without the presupposition inquiry could not go forward, but, when once made, the presupposition may be disregarded without any damage resulting to the explanation. To conclude, however, that teleology does not exist or that it has been explained is unwarranted. It both exists and is unexplained. An appeal to final causes directs attention to this fact. But it goes further. It insists that an additional cause should be incorporated among the already ascertained factors in any process. It invokes some "end," "form," "idea," "entelechy," "psychoid," "soul," to account for the fact that specific ends are reached. The situation thus produced is ambiguous and confusing. If one asks what is the specific function of the final cause, the answer is, obviously, to give the product its specific

character. Since, however, the product must first exist before its specific character is realized, and since this character has already been presupposed, the answer appears to mean nothing at all or an absurdity. An acorn is not an oak, but to put an oak into the acorn in order to explain why acorns grow into oaks instead of into fishes, is like putting an explosion into gunpowder in order to explain why it explodes when ignited. In other words to put the end of a process into the beginning of it in order to explain why that end is reached, is either meaningless or absurd. For, assuredly, if the end existed at the beginning we should need more than all our wit to distinguish the one from the other. A world so constituted would be a world where nothing could happen, a perfectly static world. If it is urged that this is only a caricature of the doctrine of final causes, the reply may wisely be made that that doctrine is only a caricature of the facts. For little more is gained besides a kind of mystification of the mind by expressing the doctrine in terms less gross than those here employed.

Yet something is, perhaps, gained, although a more refined expression is not necessary to secure it, and although the gain is not a gain for the doctrine itself. The appeal to final causes calls, as we have seen, attention to the fact that teleology exists, but is unexplained. Its own explanation is devoid of force because it turns the necessary presupposition of teleology in any movement toward a result into a cause why the particular result is reached. That is why it fails to be logically convincing. But its failure does not constitute a reason for rejecting teleology. It points rather to the fact that what is needed is not explanation, but definition. It does more. It points also to the fact that any definition of teleology must recognize an essential diversity of character in the processes involved in any change. Things and the elements of things are specifically different in their character and their operations. In terms of use, uses are always specific and in specific directions.

When we indulge in speculations about the origin of things in general we are forced to

conceive that origin as capable of yielding the kind of world we discover ours to be. Such speculations may at first impose themselves upon the mind as explanations of why things are as they are, but candid scrutiny can find in them only more or less successful generalizations of the obvious. Thus our attempt to explain why the processes of the world move on in specific and distinguished directions with specific and distinguished results, amounts, in the last analysis, to a generalization of the fact of specific difference in a dynamic world. In biology, for instance, the problem of the origin of species is always the problem of the origin of particular species, and its solution is not an explanation of the existence of species generally. The solution is rather the fact of specific differences generalized and refined in view of the conditions under which they exist. By this is not meant, of course, that biological species must always have existed, but that ultimately specific differences in the factors dealt with must exist if specific differences in the results of their operation are to be made clear. Expressing the matter once more in general terms, recognition is here asked of the fact that uses are specific and operate in specific directions. In other words, to claim that things are generally useful is not to exhibit the fact of teleology in the processes of nature. The particular — and, indeed, many — ways in which they are useful must first be discriminated if there is to be any pertinent consideration of the adaptation of means to ends. The teleology of nature is not, therefore, a general drift toward some general result, it is always in individualized directions. It is a teleology of special cases. Our world is thus a collection of concretes, so that we are always inquiring about some definite thing, a star, an atom, an element, an organism, or some specific relation of these things to one another. There is no other kind of profitable inquiry, because there is no other kind of subject-matter for investigation. Ultimately concrete and specific differences in the character and operations of whatever factors go to make up the world, appear, thus, to be the first element in a definition of natural teleology. Given such differences,



any change, no matter how it originated, would be subject to them, and the resulting movement be consequently a controlled movement.

Natural teleology involves more than controlled movement. We get but an inadequate picture of things if we view them only as the arrangement of given factors under fixed conditions. For the movements of nature are marked by unmistakable gains and losses; they are helped and hindered. In view of these helps and hindrances, it is possible for us to select any one of the concrete things of the world and regard it as a centre, while the others form its varying attendants or environment. The world's processes may thus be regarded as the interaction between a thing and its surroundings. Since the selection of any centre is at our pleasure, this procedure has a certain universality about it, so that the complete natural history of anything would be a history of nature itself. Yet many such histories would have to be written, for the world as a whole has no possible single history, because it has no possible environment with which to be related. But one may say that it has many histories, because, as a whole, it is but the sum of all possible distinctions between a thing and its environment. Thus we come once more upon the fact of ultimately specific differences, but we come upon it under new aspects. For to construe the world as the environment of any chosen thing as its centre, reveals the world as contributing, not only in different ways, but with unequal success to the processes of that thing. The elements in the environment are not all useful, and those that are useful are not all equally so. Any thing's existence presents itself thus as a kind of survival, as a centre where the useful in a given direction has been in excess. While attempts to explain survival are not usually successful because they have a fatal tendency to reduce themselves to the simple statement that things do survive, it is evident that only in a teleological world is the concept of survival appropriate. Indeed, when the concept is critically examined, it appears to mean primarily that all things are not equally useful in supporting individual existence.

Natural teleology involves, therefore, the recognition that use is comparative. Things and the elements of things differ in their teleological importance. Deductively expressed, one might say: Given a world made up of specifically different elements in dynamic relations and of different values with respect to any processes which might occur, these processes would result in specific products the existence of which could be construed as survivals, as the adaptations of means to ends, as the success of processes which help more over those that help less. The deductive expression ought not, however, to blind our eyes to the fact that it is not an hypothesis invented to explain the world. It is only a generalization of familiar facts.

The third element in a definition of natural teleology is a corollary of the preceding. Uses are not only specifically different and of comparative value, they also persist and accumulate. The eye, when it appeared, afforded, not a temporary glimpse of the world, but a continuing vision of it. This persistence and accumulation, however, should be construed under the general limitations already set for the definition. That is, we do not appear warranted in speaking of progress in general; we may speak only of specific and individualized progress. Consequently, when we affirm that natural teleology is progressive, we affirm that factors of greater teleological importance have continued to operate. The fact of such continuance is the fact of progress. It is possible, therefore, to imagine that a given thing, if it met with no hindrance in the progressive appropriation of the useful, would present an instance of the steady approach towards complete adaptation to its environment and towards a conquest of the uses of the world. The Malthusian rabbit might thus become sovereign of the universe. It is, therefore, not unnatural to believe that, if there is any dominating direction in the appropriation of the useful, that direction must be due to the operation of some individual being. But sober thinking is reminded that the directions in which use is appropriated are many and diverse, and that hindrances consequently oppose complete adaptation. There is war in the world, and

sovereignty there is hazardous. The most dominating of beings may succumb to the most insignificant, as man may be destroyed by the animalcule. Yet sober thinking must also recognize that the symbol of war is appropriate, and that uncertainty in the tenure of supremacy does not obscure the fact that there are genuine victories.

The definition of natural teleology involves, therefore, besides the recognition that uses are specific, in specific and controlled directions, and of comparative value in view of these directions, the further recognition that uses are progressive. Let it be insisted once more, however, that the definition is not proposed as an explanation of teleology in the world's processes, but as a generalization from facts which we can, in wisdom, neither overlook nor explain away. While no attempt has been made to question the right of any science to employ the categories it finds best adapted to its specific aims, the attempt has been made to justify metaphysics in the employment of the category of use.

#### IV

There are, doubtless, various applications of the general definition of natural teleology which has been here proposed. These lie outside the scope of this discussion. There is, however, a special instance of teleology which may serve to throw the definition into sharper relief, and which affords inquiries of special interest — the teleology of consciousness. That it is useful to be conscious is palpably evident in spite of the difficulties one may encounter in defining just how thought can change the world. These difficulties cannot obscure the significance to be attached to these moments in the world's history when its teleology becomes a conscious teleology and is reflectively considered. The significance may at first be emotional. Consciousness may be a "lyric cry" — to adapt Professor Santayana's phrase — involving joy over discovered uses or sorrow over frustrated aims. But the deeper significance lies evidently in the direction of foresight and knowledge. To anticipate advantage or disadvantage, and to know the means by which the one may be gained and

the other avoided, presents the most signal instance of natural teleology that can be cited.

The conception of a world like ours in all respects save the presence of thought has already been suggested as philosophically warranted. Such a world would have a past and a future, and its history would display the facts of comparative use and progressive adaptation which have been embodied in the general definition of natural teleology. Yet it would appear to be impossible to assign to these facts or to the past and the future any characteristic efficiency. This statement does not mean that such a world would lack continuity in its development, that any given factor in it would be what it is irrespective of its past, or that its future would be out of relation to other future factors. But it does mean that the teleology in such a world would be only a characteristic of it, indicating the appropriation of use, but that this characteristic would not be detached from the specific instances of its operation and thus become itself a factor in that world's processes. This, after all, is but a way of saying that a world so conceived lacks consciousness, that its processes go on uncomplicated by any recognition of their uses, actual, prospective, or retrospective. Yet it may serve to indicate the kind of complication which the presence of consciousness introduces. The spider may spin its web unconsciously and produce thereby a product useful to it; but if it spins consciously, the past and future have entered into its activity in a new and significant manner. It may even be led to contemplate the miserable fate of its prey. Without consciousness, yesterday is only today's past, tomorrow only today's possible future. With consciousness today's changes occur in view of yesterday and of the possible tomorrow. With consciousness the processes of the world become at once retrospective and prospective in their operation.

There is, therefore, design in the world. Only, as we have seen, that design may not be invoked to explain the world's teleology, because it is one instance of that teleology. But the fact that it is such makes it unnecessary to seek further for the ground of moral

distinctions or for a rational confidence that nature is sufficient for the demands design may make upon it. Responsibility is not imposed from without. It arises from no authoritative command. It is, rather, the inevitable consequence of design. For to plan and put the plan in operation is to become the cause of the issuing result, the point where responsibility is definitely lodged. So we do not hold rocks responsible because they fall, but we do hold men responsible because they think. Because they think today is changed in view of yesterday and tomorrow, and consciousness being the possibility of such a change takes upon itself the thoughtful construction of the issue in the light of the world's natural teleology. That is the essence of morality. Man was not made moral by the prohibition of an apple. The fruit was good to eat, and the conscious discovery of its use turned man into a designing being. Thereafter he must learn the natural uses of things and turn them to his advantage, but at the risk of reciprocal demands. Thus, with consciousness, the world's teleology is a moral teleology. Given the world, which is not that world unilluminated by thought which philosophy in its freedom may imagine, but a world among whose factors conscious beings must be numbered as instances of its productivity, these beings may not be surprised that their world is moral. Its moral character impresses them as again something necessary, something for the absence of which they can discover no reason. What the sun is to the movements of the planets, that justice is to the movements of design.

Perfect justice, like perfect equilibrium, may be unattainable, but justice is not a visionary ideal, unsupported by the teleology from which it arises. For, as we have seen, uses are specific, cumulative, and of comparative value in their operations. Justice has, therefore, for its exercise, not only the distinction of the useful and the useless, the good and the bad, but also the distinction of the better and the worse. Accordingly, while design may despair of success in eliminating evil, it ought not to despair of success in attempting to achieve the better.

For these attempts are supported by the world's natural teleology, by the comparative value of the uses of things. Knowledge thus ministers to morality in a twofold manner, by the localizing of responsibility and by the conscious discovering of the more useful. The end of such discovery is most evidently beyond our vision. Every new scrutiny of the world's uses reveals new and unsuspected possibilities, and warrants the conviction that the better is attainable and attainable with a diminution of injustice. The world may not have had its origin in reason, moral progress in it may waver, great gains may there be lost, and civilization go backward, but the world affords of itself the vision of its own rational conquest. To fix responsibility and to promote science appear thus to be the primary essentials of moral progress. To entertain, therefore, the vision of the world's rational conquest is not to be an optimist by temperament, but an optimist by conviction. We may not proclaim out of an abundance of well-being that this is the best possible world and that all things work together for good. For the moral lesson of natural teleology is that the world can be improved. Ours is the best possible world only because it has the capacity to engender and support the effort to make it better.

Yet enthusiasm is not to be denied to philosophy. To envisage the world in the light of reason is to beget emotions for which the impersonal categories of knowledge afford inadequate expression. These emotions, too, are natural, responses to provoking stimuli as much as the vibrating chord to the finger's touch. Man may, therefore, sing the praises of nature and be devout or fearful in her presence, for to personify her is but to accord her the filial recognition that persons are her offspring, born of her body, and nourished at her breasts. To refuse emotional responses to her revelations because they do not involve an explanation of her origin or of her destiny, is not a sign of wisdom, but of insensibility. For the contemplation of the stars has other natural uses besides the advancement of astronomy.

Indeed, man can hardly be indifferent to the fact that nature evokes from him emo-

tional responses as well as intellectual curiosity. But it is impossible for him so to divorce emotion and reason that his thinking and his feeling may remain unrelated and independent activities. For consciousness is comprehensive in its scope, including in its survey the fact that we live fully as much as the fact that we fall. It is also reflective, embracing, as we are wont to say, its own operations as something of which it also takes cognizance. This is, however, only the affirmation that consciousness is consciousness, that the existence of facts is not the considering of them. But it serves again to render conspicuous the particular use to be assigned to consciousness, the use of rendering the past and the future connectable and continuous now. It is creative of nothing but comprehension, and is subservient to the materials it finds. Its

task is thus the rational organization of this material in its entirety. While, therefore, its exercise may discover emotions, we may not say that it is because we are conscious that we rejoice or fear, just as we may not say that it is because we are conscious that we have a certain specific gravity. The emotional life presents itself, thus, as one object for intelligent control and organization. But it does present itself as such an object. To claim, therefore, that teleology is natural and that consciousness is its most signal illustration, is not thoughtlessly to discard the obligation to seek for the emotional life its appropriate support and the befitting sphere of its operation. It is, rather, to urge that the search be conducted with an intensified appreciation of the immediate sources by which that life is quickened and refined.

# George Santayana

(1863- )

GEORGE SANTAYANA was brought to this country from Spain when he was nine years of age in order to be educated here. Although he was a brilliant student whose main interests were reading and drawing, his dominant desire was to have a career in the Spanish army or the diplomatic service. Only the limited means of the family saved him for philosophy.

After his graduation from Harvard, he became an instructor in philosophy there, and the rest of his life can be described in the phrase he used as title to an autobiographical essay: "A Brief History of My Opinions." A summary of his intellectual career is a record of all that seems to have mattered in his life. He taught at Harvard until he was nearly fifty when an inheritance left him free to follow his inclinations. Since then he has resided in England and Italy.

## ON THE RELATIVE VALUE OF THINGS AND IDEAS<sup>1</sup>

. . . . .  
It is a remarkable fact, which may easily be misinterpreted, that while all the benefits and pleasures of life seem to be associated with external things, and all certain knowledge seems to describe material laws, yet a deified nature has generally inspired a religion of melancholy. Why should the only intelligible philosophy seem to defeat reason and the chief means of benefiting mankind seem to blast our best hopes?

Whence this profound aversion to so beautiful and fruitful a universe? Whence this persistent search for invisible regions and powers and for metaphysical explanations that can explain nothing, while nature's

voice without and within man cries aloud to him to look, act, and enjoy? And when someone, in protest against such senseless oracular prejudices, has actually embraced the life and faith of nature and taught others to look to the natural world for all motives and sanctions, expecting thus to refresh and marvellously to invigorate human life, why have those innocent hopes failed so miserably? Why is that sensuous optimism we may call Greek, or that industrial optimism we may call American, such a thin disguise for despair? Why does each melt away and become a mockery at the first approach of reflection? Why has man's conscience in the end invariably rebelled against

<sup>1</sup> *The Life of Reason — Reason in Common Sense*, pp. 189-204. New York, 1929. Reprinted with the permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

naturalism and reverted in some form or other to a cultus of the unseen?

We may answer in the words of Saint Paul: because things seen are temporal and things not seen are eternal. And we may add, remembering our analysis of the objects inhabiting the mind, that the eternal is the truly human, that which is akin to the first indispensable products of intelligence, which arise by the fusion of successive images in discourse, and transcend the particular in time, peopling the mind with permanent and recognizable objects and strengthening it with a synthetic, dramatic apprehension of itself and its own experience. Concretion in existence, on the contrary, yields essentially detached and empirical unities, foreign to mind in spite of their order, and unintelligible in spite of their clearness. Reason fails to assimilate in them precisely that which makes them real, namely, their presence here and now, in this order and number. The form and quality of them we can retain, domesticate, and weave into the texture of reflection, but their existence and individuality remain a datum of sense needing to be verified anew at every moment and actually receiving continual verification or disproof while we live in this world.

"This world," we call it, not without justifiable pathos, for many other worlds are conceivable, and if discovered might prove more rational and intelligible and more akin to the soul than this strange universe which man has hitherto always looked upon with increasing astonishment. The materials of experience are no sooner in hand than they are transformed by intelligence, reduced to those permanent presences, those natures and relations, which alone can live in discourse. Those materials, rearranged into the abstract summaries we call history or science, or pieced out into the reconstructions and extensions we call poetry or religion, furnish us with ideas of as many dream-worlds as we please, all nearer to reason's ideal than is the actual chaos of perceptual experience, and some nearer to the heart's desire. When an empirical philosophy, therefore, calls us back from the irresponsible flights of imagination to the shock of sense and tries to remind us that in this alone we touch existence and

come upon fact, we feel dispossessed of our nature and cramped in our life. The actuality possessed by external experience cannot make up for its instability, nor the applicability of scientific principles for their hypothetical character. The dependence upon sense, which we are reduced to when we consider the world of existences, becomes a too plain hint of our essential impotence and mortality, while the play of logical fancy, though it remain inevitable, is saddened by a consciousness of its own insignificance.

That dignity, then, which inheres in logical ideas and their affinity to moral enthusiasm, springs from their congruity with the primary habits of intelligence and idealization. The soul or self or personality, which in sophisticated social life is so much the centre of passion and concern, is itself an idea, a concretion in discourse; and the level on which it swims comes to be, by association and affinity, the region of all the more vivid and massive human interests. The pleasures which lie beneath it are ignored, and the ideals which lie above it are not perceived. Aversion to an empirical or naturalistic philosophy accordingly expresses a sort of logical patriotism and attachment to homespun ideas. The actual is too remote and unfriendly to the dreamer; to understand it he has to learn a foreign tongue, which his native prejudice imagines to be unmeaning and unpoetical. The truth is, however, that nature's language is too rich for man; and the discomfort he feels when he is compelled to use it merely marks his lack of education. There is nothing cheaper than idealism. It can be had by merely not observing the ineptitude of our chance prejudices and by declaring that the first rhymes that have struck our ear are the eternal and necessary harmonies of the world.

The thinker's bias is naturally favorable to logical ideas. The man of reflection will attribute, as far as possible, validity and reality to these alone. Platonism remains the classic instance of this way of thinking. Living in an age of rhetoric, with an education that dealt with nothing but ideal entities verbal, moral, or mathematical, Plato saw in concretions in discourse the true elements

of being. Definable meanings, being the terms of thought, must also, he fancied, be the constituents of reality. And with that directness and audacity which was possible to the ancients, and of which Pythagoreans and Eleatics had already given brilliant examples, he set up these terms of discourse, like the Pythagorean numbers, for absolute and eternal entities, existing before all things, revealed in all things, giving the cosmic artificer his models and the creature his goal. By some inexplicable necessity the creation had taken place. The ideas had multiplied themselves in a flux of innumerable images which could be recognized by their resemblance to their originals, but were at once cancelled and expunged by virtue of their essential inadequacy. What sounds are to words and words to thoughts, that was a thing to its idea.

Plato, however, retained the moral and significant essence of his ideas, and while he made them ideal absolutes, fixed meanings antecedent to their changing expressions, never dreamed that they could be natural existences, or psychological beings. In an original thinker, in one who really thinks and does not merely argue, to call a thing supernatural, or spiritual, or intelligible is to declare that it is no thing at all, no existence actual or possible, but a value, a term of thought, a merely ideal principle; and the more its reality in such a sense is insisted on the more its incommensurability with brute existence is asserted. To express this ideal reality myth is the natural vehicle; a vehicle Plato could avail himself of all the more freely that he inherited a religion still plastic and conscious of its poetic essence, and did not have to struggle, like his modern disciples, with the arrested childishness of minds that for a hundred generations have learned their metaphysics in the cradle. His ideas, although their natural basis was ignored, were accordingly always ideal; they always represented meanings and functions and were never degraded from the moral to the physical sphere. The counterpart of this genuine ideality was that the theory retained its moral force and did not degenerate into a bewildered and idolatrous pantheism. Plato

conceived the soul's destiny to be her emancipation from those material things which in this illogical apparition were so alien to her essence. She should return, after her baffling and stupefying intercourse with the world of sense and accident, into the native heaven of her ideas. For animal desires were no less illusory, and yet no less significant, than sensuous perceptions. They engaged man in the pursuit of the good and taught him, through disappointment, to look for it only in those satisfactions which can be permanent and perfect. Love, like intelligence, must rise from appearance to reality, and rest in that divine world which is the fulfilment of the human.

A geometrician does a good service when he declares and explicates the nature of the triangle, an object suggested by many casual and recurring sensations. His service is not less real, even if less obvious, when he arrests some fundamental concretion in discourse, and formulates the first principles of logic. Mastering such definitions, sinking into the dry life of such forms, he may spin out and develop indefinitely, in the freedom of his irresponsible logic, their implications and congruous extensions, opening by his demonstration a depth of knowledge which we should otherwise never have discovered in ourselves. But if the geometer had a fanatical zeal and forbade us to consider space and the triangles it contains otherwise than as his own ideal science considers them: forbade us, for instance, to inquire how we came to perceive those triangles or that space; what organs and senses conspired in furnishing the idea of them; what material objects show that character, and how they came to offer themselves to our observation — then surely the geometer would qualify his service with a distinct injury, and while he opened our eyes to one fascinating vista would tend to blind them to others no less tempting and beautiful. For the naturalist and psychologist have also their rights and can tell us things well worth knowing; nor will any theory they may possibly propose concerning the origin of spatial ideas and their material embodiments ever invalidate the demonstrations of geometry. These, in their hypothetical,

sphere, are perfectly autonomous and self-generating, and their applicability to experience will hold so long as the initial images they are applied to continue to abound in perception.

If we awoke tomorrow in a world containing nothing but music, geometry would indeed lose its relevance to our future experience; but it would keep its ideal cogency, and become again a living language if any spatial objects should ever reappear in sense.

The history of such reappearances — natural history — is meantime a good subject for observation and experiment. Chronicler and critic can always approach experience with a method complementary to the deductive methods pursued in mathematics and logic: instead of developing the import of a definition, he can investigate its origin and describe its relation to other disparate phenomena. The mathematician develops the import of given ideas; the psychologist investigates their origin and describes their relation to the rest of human experience. So the prophet develops the import of his trance, and the theologian the import of the prophecy: which prevents not the historian from coming later and showing the origin, the growth, and the possible function of that maniacal sort of wisdom. True, the theologian commonly dreads a critic more than does the geometer, but this happens only because the theologian has probably not developed the import of his facts with any austerity or clearness, but has distorted that ideal interpretation with all sorts of concessions and side-glances at other tenets to which he is already pledged, so that he justly fears, when his methods are exposed, that the religious heart will be alienated from him and his conclusions be left with no foothold in human nature. If he had not been guilty of such misrepresentation, no history or criticism that reviewed his construction would do anything but recommend it to all those who found in themselves the primary religious facts and religious faculties which that construction had faithfully interpreted in its ideal deductions and extensions. All who perceived the facts would thus learn their import; and theology would reveal to

the soul her natural religion, just as Euclid reveals to architects and navigators the structure of natural space, so that they value his demonstrations not only for their hypothetical cogency but for their practical relevance and truth.

Now, like the geometer and ingenuous theologian that he was, Plato developed the import of moral and logical experience. Even his followers, though they might give rein to narrower and more fantastic enthusiasms, often unveiled secrets, hidden in the oracular intent of the heart, which might never have been disclosed but for their lessons. But with a zeal unbecoming so well grounded a philosophy they turned their backs upon the rest of wisdom, they disparaged the evidence of sense, they grew hot against the ultimate practical sanctions furnished by impulse and pleasure, they proscribed beauty in art (where Plato had proscribed chiefly what to a fine sensibility is meretricious ugliness), and in a word they sought to abolish all human activities other than the one pre-eminent in themselves. In revenge for their hostility the great world has never given them more than a distrustful admiration and, confronted daily by the evident truths they denied, has encouraged itself to forget the truths they asserted. For they had the bias of reflection and man is born to do more than reflect; they attributed reality and validity only to logical ideas, and man finds other objects continually thrusting themselves before his eyes, claiming his affection and controlling his fortunes.

The most legitimate constructions of reason soon become merely speculative, soon pass, I mean, beyond the sphere of practical application; and the man of affairs, adjusting himself at every turn to the opaque brutality of fact, loses his respect for the higher reaches of logic and forgets that his recognition of facts themselves is an application of logical principles. In his youth, perhaps, he pursued metaphysics, which are the love-affairs of the understanding; now he is wedded to convention and seeks in the passion he calls business or in the habit he calls duty some substitute for natural happiness. He fears to question the value of his life, having found that such questioning adds nothing to his



powers; and he thinks the mariner would die of old age in port who should wait for reason to justify his voyage. Reason is indeed like the sad Iphigenia whom her royal father, the Will, must sacrifice before any wind can fill his sails. The emanation of all things from the One involves not only the incarnation but the crucifixion of the Logos. Reason must be eclipsed by its supposed expressions, and can only shine in a darkness which does not comprehend it. For reason is essentially hypothetical and subsidiary, and can never constitute what it expresses in man, nor what it recognizes in nature.

If logic should refuse to make this initial self-sacrifice and to subordinate itself to impulse and fact, it would immediately become irrational and forfeit its own justification. For it exists by virtue of a human impulse and in answer to a human need. To ask a man, in the satisfaction of a metaphysical passion, to forego every other good is to render him fanatical and to shut his eyes daily to the sun in order that he may see better by the starlight. The radical fault of rationalism is not any incidental error committed in its deductions, although such necessarily abound in every human system. Its great original sin is its denial of its own basis and its refusal to occupy its due place in the world, an ignorant fear of being invalidated by its history and dishonored, as it were, if its ancestry is hinted at. Only bastards should fear that fate, and criticism would indeed be fatal to a bastard philosophy, to one that does not spring from practical reason and has no roots in life. But those products of reason which arise by reflection on fact, and those spontaneous and demonstrable systems of ideas which can be verified in experience, and thus serve to render the fact calculable and articulate, will lose nothing of their lustre by discovering their lineage. So the idea of nature remains true after psychology has analyzed its origin, and not only true, but beautiful and beneficent. For unlike many negligible products of speculative fancy, it is woven out of recurrent perceptions into a hypothetical cause from which further perceptions can be deduced as they are actually experienced.

Such a mechanism once discovered con-

firms itself at every breath we draw, and surrounds every object in history and nature with infinite and true suggestions, making it doubly interesting, fruitful, and potent over the mind. The naturalist accordingly welcomes criticism because his constructions, though no less hypothetical and speculative than the idealist's dreams, are such legitimate and fruitful fictions that they are obvious truths. For truth, at the intelligible level where it arises, means not sensible fact, but valid ideation, verified hypothesis, and inevitable, stable inference. If the idealist fears and deprecates any theory of his own origin and function, he is only obeying the instinct of self-preservation; for he knows very well that his past will not bear examination. He is heir to every superstition and by profession an apologist; his deepest vocation is to rescue, by some logical *tour de force*, what spontaneously he himself would have taken for a consecrated error. Now history and criticism would involve, as he instinctively perceives, the reduction of his doctrines to their pragmatic value, to their ideal significance for real life. But he detests any admission of relativity in his doctrines, all the more because he cannot avow his reasons for detesting it; and zeal, here as in so many cases, becomes the cover and evidence of a bad conscience. Bigotry and craft, with a rhetorical vilification of enemies, then come to reinforce in the prophet that natural limitation of his interests which turns his face away from history and criticism; until his system, in its monstrous unreality and disingenuousness, becomes intolerable, and provokes a general revolt in which too often the truth of it is buried with the error in a common oblivion.

If idealism is intrenched in the very structure of human reason, empiricism represents all those energies of the external universe which, as Spinoza says, must infinitely exceed the energies of man. If meditation breeds science, wisdom comes by disillusion, even on the subject of science itself. Docility to the facts makes the sanity of science. Reason is only half grown and not really distinguishable from imagination so long as she cannot check and recast her own processes wherever they render the moulds of thought unfit for

their subject-matter. Docility is, as we have seen, the deepest condition of reason's existence; for if a form of mental synthesis were by chance developed which was incapable of appropriating the data of sense, these data could not be remembered or introduced at all into a growing and cumulative experience. Sensations would leave no memorial; while logical thoughts would play idly, like so many parasites in the mind, and ultimately languish and die of inanition. To be nourished and employed, intelligence must have developed such structure and habits as will enable it to assimilate what food comes in its way; so that the persistence of any intellectual habit is a proof that it has some applicability, however partial, to the facts of sentience.

This applicability, the prerequisite of significant thought, is also its eventual test; and the gathering of new experiences, the consciousness of more and more facts crowding into the memory and demanding co-ordination, is at once the presentation to reason of her legitimate problem and a proof that she is already at work. It is a presentation of her problem, because reason is not a faculty of dreams but a method in living; and by facing the flux of sensations and im-

pulses that constitute mortal life with the gift of ideal construction and the aspiration toward eternal goods, she is only doing her duty and manifesting what she is. To accumulate facts, moreover, is in itself to prove that rational activity is already awakened, because a consciousness of multitudinous accidents diversifying experience involves a wide scope in memory, good methods of classification, and keen senses, so that all working together they may collect many observations. Memory and all its instruments are embodiments, on a modest scale, of rational activities which in theory and speculation reappear upon a higher level. The expansion of the mind in point of retentiveness and wealth of images is as much an advance in knowledge as is its development in point of organization. The structure may be widened at the base as well as raised toward its ideal summit, and while a mass of information imperfectly digested leaves something still for intelligence to do, it shows at the same time how much intelligence has done already.

The function of reason is to dominate experience; and obviously openness to new impressions is no less necessary to that end than is the possession of principles by which new impressions may be interpreted.

## HOW THOUGHT IS PRACTICAL<sup>1</sup>

NOTHING is more natural or more congruous with all the analogies of experience than that animals should feel and think. The relation of mind to body, of reason to nature, seems to be actually this: when bodies have reached a certain complexity and vital equilibrium, a sense begins to inhabit them which is focused upon the preservation of that body and on its reproduction. This sense, as it becomes reflective and expressive of physical welfare, points more and more to its own persistence and harmony, and generates the Life of Reason. Nature is reason's basis and theme; reason is nature's consciousness; and, from the point of view of that consciousness when

it has arisen, reason is also nature's justification and goal.

To separate things so closely bound together as are mind and body, reason and nature, is consequently a violent and artificial divorce, and a man of judgment will instinctively discredit any philosophy in which it is decreed. But to avoid divorce it is well first to avoid unnatural unions, and not to attribute to our two elements, which must be partners for life, relations repugnant to their respective natures and offices. Now, the body is an instrument, the mind is its function, the witness and reward of its operation. Mind is the body's entelechy, a value which ac-

<sup>1</sup> *The Life of Reason — Reason in Common Sense*, pp. 205-07, 212, 218-20, 222-23. New York, 1929. Reprinted with the permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

crues to the body when it has reached a certain perfection, of which it would be a pity, so to speak, that it should remain unconscious; so that while the body feeds the mind the mind perfects the body, lifting it and all its natural relations and impulses into the moral world, into the sphere of interests and ideas.

No connection could be closer than this reciprocal involution, as nature and life reveal it; but the connection is natural, not dialectical. The union will be denaturalized and, so far as philosophy goes, actually destroyed, if we seek to carry it on into logical equivalence. If we isolate the terms mind and body and study the inward implications of each apart, we shall never discover the other. That matter cannot, by transposition of its particles, *become* what we call consciousness, is an admitted truth; that mind cannot *become* its own occasions or determine its own march, though it be a truth not recognized by all philosophers, is in itself no less obvious. Matter, dialectically studied, makes consciousness seem a superfluous and unaccountable addendum; mind, studied in the same way, makes nature an embarrassing idea, a figment which ought to be subservient to conscious aims and perfectly transparent, but which remains opaque and overwhelming. In order to escape these sophistications, it suffices to revert to immediate observation and state the question in its proper terms: nature lives, and perception is a private echo and response to ambient motions. The soul is the voice of the body's interests, in watching them a man defines the world that sustains him and that conditions all his satisfactions. In discerning his origin he christens Nature by the eloquent name of mother, under which title she enters the universe of discourse. Simultaneously he discerns his own existence and marks off the inner region of his dreams. And it behooves him not to obliterate these discoveries. By trying to give his mind false points of attachment in nature he would disfigure not only nature but also that reason which is so much the essence of his life.

If we must speak, therefore, of causal relations between mind and body, we should say that matter determines the existence and

distribution of mind, and mind determines the discovery and value of matter. To ask for an efficient cause, to trace back a force or investigate origins, is to have already turned one's face in the direction of matter and mechanical laws: no success in that undertaking can fail to be a triumph for materialism. To ask for a justification, on the other hand, is to turn no less resolutely in the direction of ideal results and actualities from which instrumentality and further use have been eliminated. Spirit is useless, being the end of things: but it is not vain, since it alone rescues all else from vanity.

This inclusion of mind in nature, however, is as far as possible from constituting the mind's function and value, or its efficacy in a moral and rational sense. To have prepared changes in matter would give no rationality to mind unless those changes in turn paved the way to some better mental existence. The worth of natural efficacy is therefore always derivative; the utility of mind would be no more precious than the utility of matter; both borrow all their worth from the part they may play empirically in introducing those moral values which are intrinsic and self-sufficing. In so far as thought is instrumental it is not worth having, any more than matter, except for its promise; it must terminate in something truly profitable and ultimate which, being good in itself, may lend value to all that led up to it. But this ultimate good is itself consciousness, thought, rational activity; so that what instrumental mentality may have preceded might be abolished without loss, if matter suffices to sustain reason in being; or if that instrumental mentality is worth retaining, it is so only because it already contains some premonition and image of its own fulfilment. In a word, the value of thought is ideal. The material efficacy which may be attributed to it is the proper efficacy of matter — an efficacy which matter would doubtless claim if we knew enough of its secret mechanism. And when that imputed and incongruous utility was subtracted from ideas they would appear in their proper form of expressions, realizations, ultimate fruits.

The incongruity of making thought, in its moral and logical essence, an instrument in the natural world will appear from a different point of view if we shift the discussion for a moment to a transcendental level. Since the material world is an object for thought, and potential in relation to immediate experience, it can hardly lie in the same plane of reality with the thought to which it appears. The spectator on this side of the footlights, while surely regarded by the play as a whole, cannot expect to figure in its mechanism or to see himself strutting among the actors on the boards. He listens and is served, being at once impotent and supreme.

What gives the material world a legitimate status and perpetual pertinence in human discourse is the conscious life it supports and carries in its own direction, as a ship carries its passengers or rather as a passion carries its hopes. Conscious interests first justify and moralize the mechanisms they express. Eventual satisfactions, while their form and possibility must be determined by animal tendencies, alone render these tendencies vehicles of the good. The direction in which benefit shall lie must be determined by irrational impulse, but the attainment of benefit consists in crowning that impulse with its ideal achievement. Nature dictates what

men shall seek and prompts them to seek it; a possibility of happiness is thus generated, and only its fulfilment would justify nature and man in their common venture.

Satisfaction is the touchstone of value; without reference to it all talk about good and evil, progress or decay, is merely confused verbiage, pure sophistry in which the juggler adroitly withdraws attention from what works the wonder — namely, that human and moral coloring to which the terms he plays with owe whatever efficacy they have. Metaphysicians sometimes so define the good as to make it a matter of no importance; not seldom they give that name to the sum of all evils. A good, absolute in the sense of being divorced from all natural demand and all possible satisfaction, would be as remote as possible from goodness: to call it good is mere disloyalty to morals, brought about by some fantastic or dialectical passion. In excellence there is an essential bias, an opposition to the possible opposite; this bias expresses a mechanical impulse, a situation that has stirred the senses and the will. Impulse makes value possible; and the value becomes actual when the impulse issues in processes that give it satisfaction and have a conscious worth. Character is the basis of happiness and happiness the sanction of character.

## HOW RELIGION MAY BE AN EMBODIMENT OF REASON<sup>1</sup>

EXPERIENCE has repeatedly confirmed that well-known maxim of Bacon's, that "a little philosophy inclineth man's mind to atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion." In every age the most comprehensive thinkers have found in the religion of their time and country something they could accept, interpreting and illustrating that religion so as to give it depth and universal application. Even the heretics and atheists, if they have had profundity, turn out after a while to be forerunners of some

new orthodoxy. What they rebel against is a religion alien to their nature; they are atheists only by accident, and relatively to a convention which inwardly offends them, but they yearn mightily in their own souls after the religious acceptance of a world interpreted in their own fashion. So it appears in the end that their atheism and loud protestations were in fact the hastier part of their thought, since what emboldened them to deny the poor world's faith was that they were too impatient to understand it. Indeed,

<sup>1</sup> *The Life of Reason in Religion*, chap. 1, also pp. 114-17, 190-92. New York, 1905. Reprinted with the permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

the enlightenment common to young wits and worm-eaten old satirists, who plume themselves on detecting the scientific ineptitude of religion — something which the blindest half see — is not nearly enlightened enough; it points to notorious facts incompatible with religious tenets literally taken, but it leaves unexplored the habits of thought from which those tenets sprang, their original meaning, and their true function. Such studies would bring the sceptic face to face with the mystery and pathos of mortal existence. They would make him understand why religion is so profoundly moving and in a sense so profoundly just. There must needs be something humane and necessary in an influence that has become the most general sanction of virtue, the chief occasion for art and philosophy, and the source, perhaps, of the best human happiness. If nothing, as Hooker said, is "so malapert as a splenetic religion," a sour irreligion is almost as perverse.

At the same time, when Bacon penned the sage epigram we have quoted he forgot to add that the God to whom depth in philosophy brings back men's minds is far from being the same from whom a little philosophy estranges them. It would be pitiful indeed if mature reflection bred no better conceptions than those which have drifted down the muddy stream of time, where tradition and passion have jumbled everything together. Traditional conceptions, when they are felicitous, may be adopted by the poet, but they must be purified by the moralist and disintegrated by the philosopher. Each religion, so dear to those whose life it sanctifies, and fulfilling so necessary a function in the society that has adopted it, necessarily contradicts every other religion, and probably contradicts itself. What religion a man shall have is a historical accident, quite as much as what language he shall speak. In the rare circumstances where a choice is possible, he may, with some difficulty, make an exchange; but even then he is only adopting a new convention which may be more agreeable to his personal temper but which is essentially as arbitrary as the old.

The attempt to speak without speaking

any particular language is not more hopeless than the attempt to have a religion that shall be no religion in particular. A courier's or a dragoman's speech may indeed be often unusual and drawn from disparate sources, not without some mixture of personal originality; but that private jargon will have a meaning only because of its analogy to one or more conventional languages and its obvious derivation from them. So travellers from one religion to another, people who have lost their spiritual nationality, may often retain a neutral and confused residuum of belief, which they may egregiously regard as the essence of all religion, so little may they remember the graciousness and naturalness of that ancestral accent which a perfect religion should have. Yet a moment's probing of the conceptions surviving in such minds will show them to be nothing but vestiges of old beliefs, creases which thought, even if emptied of all dogmatic tenets, has not been able to smooth away at its first unfolding. Later generations, if they have any religion at all, will be found either to revert to ancient authority, or to attach themselves spontaneously to something wholly novel and immensely positive, to some faith promulgated by a fresh genius and passionately embraced by a converted people. Thus every living and healthy religion has a marked idiosyncrasy. Its power consists in its special and surprising message and in the bias which that revelation gives to life. The vistas it opens and the mysteries it propounds are another world to live in; and another world to live in — whether we expect ever to pass wholly into it or no — is what we mean by having a religion.

What relation, then, does this great business of the soul, which we call religion, bear to the Life of Reason? That the relation between the two is close seems clear from several circumstances. The Life of Reason is the seat of all ultimate values. Now, the history of mankind will show us that whenever spirits at once lofty and intense have seemed to attain the highest joys, they have envisaged and attained them in religion. Religion would therefore seem to be a vehicle or a factor in rational life, since the ends of

rational life are attained by it. Moreover, the Life of Reason is an ideal to which everything in the world should be subordinated; it establishes lines of moral cleavage everywhere and makes right eternally different from wrong. Religion does the same thing. It makes absolute moral decisions. It sanctions, unifies, and transforms ethics. Religion thus exercises a function of the Life of Reason. And a further function which is common to both is that of emancipating man from his personal limitations. In different ways religions promise to transfer the soul to better conditions. A supernaturally favored kingdom is to be established for posterity upon earth, or for all the faithful in heaven, or the soul is to be freed by repeated purgations from all taint and sorrow, or it is to be lost in the absolute, or it is to become an influence and an object of adoration in the places it once haunted or wherever the activities it once loved may be carried on by future generations of its kindred. Now, reason in its way lays before us all these possibilities: it points to common objects, political and intellectual, in which an individual may lose what is mortal and accidental in himself and immortalize what is rational and human; it teaches us how sweet and fortunate death may be to those whose spirit can still live in their country and in their ideas; it reveals the radiating effects of action and the eternal objects of thought.

Yet the difference in tone and language must strike us, so soon as it is philosophy that speaks. That change should remind us that even if the function of religion and that of reason coincide, this function is performed in the two cases by very different organs. Religions are many, reason one. Religion consists of conscious ideas, hopes, enthusiasms, and objects of worship; it operates by grace and flourishes by prayer. Reason, on the other hand, is a mere principle or potential order, on which, indeed, we may come to reflect, but which exists in us ideally only, without variation or stress of any kind. We conform or do not conform to it; it does not urge or chide us, nor call for any emotions on our part other than those naturally aroused by the various objects which it unfolds in

their true nature and proportion. Religion brings some order into life by weighting it with new materials. Reason adds to the natural materials only the perfect order which it introduces into them. Rationality is nothing but a form, an ideal constitution which experience may more or less embody. Religion is a part of experience itself, a mass of sentiments and ideas. The one is an inviolate principle, the other a changing and struggling force. And yet this struggling and changing force of religion seems to direct man toward something eternal. It seems to make for an ultimate harmony within the soul and for an ultimate harmony between the soul and all the soul depends upon. So that religion, in its intent, is a more conscious and direct pursuit of the Life of Reason than is society, science, or art. For these approach and fill out the ideal life tentatively and piecemeal, hardly regarding the goal or caring for the ultimate justification of their instinctive aims. Religion also has an instinctive and blind side, and bubbles up in all manner of chance practices and intuitions; soon, however, it feels its way toward the heart of things, and, from whatever quarter it may come, veers in the direction of the ultimate.

Nevertheless, we must confess that this religious pursuit of the Life of Reason has been singularly abortive. Those within the pale of each religion may prevail upon themselves to express satisfaction with its results, thanks to a fond partiality in reading the past and generous draughts of hope for the future; but anyone regarding the various religions at once and comparing their achievements with what reason requires, must feel how terrible is the disappointment which they have one and all prepared for mankind. Their chief anxiety has been to offer imaginary remedies for mortal ills, some of which are incurable essentially, while others might have been really cured by well-directed effort. The Greek oracles, for instance, pretended to heal our natural ignorance, which has its appropriate though difficult cure, while the Christian vision of heaven pretended to be an antidote to our natural death, the inevitable correlate of birth and of a

changing and conditioned existence. By methods of this sort little can be done for the real betterment of life. To confuse intelligence and dislocate sentiment by gratuitous fictions is a short-sighted way of pursuing happiness. Nature is soon avenged. An unhealthy exaltation and a one-sided morality have to be followed by regrettable reactions. When these come, the real rewards of life may seem vain to a relaxed vitality, and the very name of virtue may irritate young spirits untrained in any natural excellence. Thus religion too often debauches the morality it comes to sanction, and impedes the science it ought to fulfil.

What is the secret of this ineptitude? Why does religion, so near to rationality in its purpose, fall so far short of it in its texture and in its results? The answer is easy: Religion pursues rationality through the imagination. When it explains events or assigns causes, it is an imaginative substitute for science. When it gives precepts, insinuates ideals, or remoulds aspiration, it is an imaginative substitute for wisdom — I mean for the deliberate and impartial pursuit of all good. The conditions and the aims of life are both represented in religion poetically, but this poetry tends to arrogate to itself literal truth and moral authority, neither of which it possesses. Hence the depth and importance of religion become intelligible no less than its contradictions and practical disasters. Its object is the same as that of reason, but its method is to proceed by intuition and by unchecked poetical conceits. These are repeated and vulgarized in proportion to their original fineness and significance, till they pass for reports of objective truth and come to constitute a world of faith, superposed upon the world of experience and regarded as materially enveloping it, if not in space at least in time and in existence. The only truth of religion comes from its interpretation of life, from its symbolic rendering of that moral experience which it springs out of and which it seeks to elucidate. Its falsehood comes from the insidious misunderstanding which clings to it, to the effect that these poetic conceptions are not merely representations of experience as it is or should be,

but are rather information about experience or reality elsewhere — an experience and reality which, strangely enough, supply just the defects betrayed by reality and experience here.

Thus religion has the same original relation to life that poetry has; only poetry, which never pretends to literal validity, adds a pure value to existence, the value of a liberal imaginative exercise. The poetic value of religion would initially be greater than that of poetry itself, because religion deals with higher and more practical themes, with sides of life which are in greater need of some imaginative touch and ideal interpretation than are those pleasant or pompous things which ordinary poetry dwells upon. But this initial advantage is neutralized in part by the abuse to which religion is subject, whenever its symbolic rightness is taken for scientific truth. Like poetry, it improves the world only by imagining it improved, but not content with making this addition to the mind's furniture — an addition which might be useful and ennobling — it thinks to confer a more radical benefit by persuading mankind that, in spite of appearances, the world is really such as that rather arbitrary idealization has painted it. This spurious satisfaction is naturally the prelude to many a disappointment, and the soul has infinite trouble to emerge again from the artificial problems and sentiments into which it is thus plunged. The value of religion becomes equivocal. Religion remains an imaginative achievement, a symbolic representation of moral reality which may have a most important function in vitalizing the mind and in transmitting, by way of parables, the lessons of experience. But it becomes at the same time a continuous incidental deception; and this deception, in proportion as it is strenuously denied to be such, can work indefinite harm in the world and in the conscience.

On the whole, however, religion should not be conceived as having taken the place of anything better, but rather as having come to relieve situations which, but for its presence, would have been infinitely worse. In the thick of active life, or in the monotony of practical slavery, there is more need to



stimulate fancy than to control it. Natural instinct is not much disturbed in the human brain by what may happen in that thin superstratum of ideas which commonly overlays it. We must not blame religion for preventing the development of a moral and natural science which at any rate would seldom have appeared; we must rather thank it for the sensibility, the reverence, the speculative insight which it has introduced into the world.

We may therefore proceed to analyze the significance and the function which religion has had at its different stages, and, without disguising or in the least condoning its confusion with literal truth, we may allow ourselves to enter as sympathetically as possible into its various conceptions and emotions. They have made up the inner life of many sages, and of all those who without great genius or learning have lived steadfastly in the spirit. The feeling of reverence should itself be treated with reverence, although not at a sacrifice of truth, with which alone, in the end, reverence is compatible. Nor have we any reason to be intolerant of the partialities and contradictions which religions display. Were we dealing with a science, such contradictions would have to be instantly solved and removed; but when we are concerned with the poetic interpretation of experience, contradiction means only variety, and variety means spontaneity, wealth of resource, and a nearer approach to total adequacy.

If we hope to gain any understanding of these matters we must begin by taking them out of that heated and fanatical atmosphere in which the Hebrew tradition has enveloped them. The Jews had no philosophy, and when their national traditions came to be theoretically explicated and justified, they were made to issue in a puerile scholasticism and a rabid intolerance. The question of monotheism, for instance, was a terrible question to the Jews. Idolatry did not consist in worshipping a god who, not being ideal, might be unworthy of worship, but rather in recognizing other gods than the one worshipped in Jerusalem. To the Greeks, on the contrary, whose philosophy was enlightened and ingenuous, monotheism and polytheism

seemed perfectly innocent and compatible. To say God or the gods was only to use different expressions for the same influence, now viewed in its abstract unity and correlation with all existence, now viewed in its various manifestations in moral life, in nature, or in history. So that what in Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics meets us at every step — the combination of monotheism with polytheism — is no contradiction, but merely an intelligent variation of phrase to indicate various aspects or functions in physical and moral things. When religion appears to us in this light its contradictions and controversies lose all their bitterness. Each doctrine will simply represent the moral plane on which they live who have devised or adopted it. Religions will thus be better or worse, never true or false. We shall be able to lend ourselves to each in turn, and seek to draw from it the secret of its inspiration.

In the Protestant religion it is necessary to distinguish inner inspiration from historical entanglements. Unfortunately, as the whole doctrinal form of this religion is irrelevant to its spirit and imposed from without, being due to the stepmotherly nurture it received from the Church, we can reach a conception of its inner spirit only by studying its tendency and laws of change or its incidental expression in literature and custom. Yet these indirect symptoms are so striking that even an outsider, if at all observant, need not fear to misinterpret them. Taken externally, Protestantism is, of course, a form of Christianity; it retains the Bible and a more or less copious selection of patristic doctrines. But in its spirit and inward inspiration it is something quite as independent of Judea as of Rome. It is simply the natural religion of the Teutons raising its head above the flood of Roman and Judean influences. Its character may be indicated by saying that it is a religion of pure spontaneity, of emotional freedom, deeply respecting itself but scarcely deciphering its purposes. It is the self-consciousness of a spirit in process of incubation, jealous of its potentialities, averse to definitions and finalities of any kind because it can itself discern nothing fixed or final. It



is adventurous and puzzled by the world, full of rudimentary virtues and clear fire, energetic, faithful, rebellious to experience, inexpert in all matters of art and mind. It boasts, not without cause, of its depth and purity; but this depth and purity are those of any formless and primordial substance. It keeps unsullied that antecedent integrity which is at the bottom of every living thing and at its core; it is not acquainted with that ulterior integrity, that sanctity, which might be attained at the summit of experience through reason and speculative dominion. It accordingly mistakes vitality, both in itself and in the universe, for spiritual life.

This underlying Teutonic religion, which we must call Protestantism for lack of a better name, is anterior to Christianity and can survive it. To identify it with the Gospel may have seemed possible so long as, in opposition to pagan Christianity, the Teutonic spirit could appeal to the Gospel for support. The Gospel has indeed nothing pagan about it, but it has also nothing Teutonic; and the momentary alliance of two such disparate forces must naturally cease with the removal of the common enemy which alone united them. The Gospel is unworldly, disenchanted, ascetic; it treats ecclesiastical establishments with tolerant contempt, conforming to them with indifference; it regards prosperity as a danger, earthly ties as a burden, Sabbaths as a superstition; it revels in miracles; it is democratic and antinomian; it loves contemplation, poverty, and solitude; it meets sinners with sympathy and heartfelt forgiveness, but Pharisees and Puritans with biting scorn. In a word, it is a product of the Orient, where all things are old and equal and a profound indifference to the business of earth breeds a silent dignity and high sadness in the spirit. Protestantism is the exact opposite of all this. It is convinced of the importance of success and prosperity, it abominates what is disreputable; contemplation seems to it idleness, solitude selfishness, and poverty a sort of dishonorable punishment. It is constrained and punctilious in righteousness; it regards a married and industrious life as typically godly, and there is a sacredness to it, as of a vacant Sabbath, in the unoccu-

pied higher spaces which such an existence leaves for the soul. It is sentimental, its ritual is meager and unctuous, it expects no miracles, it thinks optimism akin to piety, and regards profitable enterprise and practical ambition as a sort of moral vocation. Its Evangelicalism lacks the notes, so prominent in the Gospel, of disillusion, humility, and speculative detachment. Its benevolence is optimistic and aims at raising men to a conventional well-being; it thus misses the inner appeal of Christian charity which, being merely remedial in physical matters, begins by renunciation and looks to spiritual freedom and peace.

There is, finally, a philosophic piety which has the universe for its object. This feeling, common to ancient and modern Stoics, has an obvious justification in man's dependence upon the natural world and in its service to many sides of the mind. Such justification of cosmic piety is rather obscured than supported by the euphemisms and ambiguities in which these philosophers usually indulge in their attempt to preserve the customary religious unction. For the more they personify the universe and give it the name of God the more they turn it into a devil. The universe, so far as we can observe it, is a wonderful and immense engine; its extent, its order, its beauty, its cruelty, makes it alike impressive. If we dramatize its life and conceive its spirit, we are filled with wonder, terror, and amusement, so magnificent is that spirit, so prolific, inexorable, grammatical, and dull. Like all animals and plants, the cosmos has its own way of doing things, not wholly rational nor ideally best, but patient, fatal, and fruitful. Great is this organism of mud and fire, terrible this vast, painful, glorious experiment. Why should we not look on the universe with piety? Is it not our substance? Are we made of other clay? All our possibilities lie from eternity hidden in its bosom. It is the dispenser of all our joys. We may address it without superstitious terrors; it is not wicked. It follows its own habits abstractedly; it can be trusted to be true to its word. Society is not impossible between it and us, and since it is the source of all our

energies, the home of all our happiness, shall we not cling to it and praise it, seeing that it vegetates so grandly and so sadly, and that it is not for us to blame it for what, doubtless, it never knew that it did? Where there is such infinite and laborious potency there is room for every hope. If we should abstain from judging a father's errors or a mother's foibles, why should we pronounce sentence on the ignorant crimes of the universe, which have passed into our own blood? The uni-

verse is the true Adam, the creation the true fall; and as we have never blamed our mythical first parent very much, in spite of the disproportionate consequences of his sin, because we felt that he was but human and that we, in his place, might have sinned too, so we may easily forgive our real ancestor, whose connatural sin we are from moment to moment committing, since it is only the necessary rashness of venturing to be without foreknowing the price or the fruits of existence.

## PREFACE TO REALMS OF BEING<sup>1</sup>

THE world is old, and can have changed but little since man arose in it, else man himself would have perished. Why, then, should he still live without a sure and sufficient philosophy? The equivalent of such a philosophy is probably hereditary in sundry animals not much older than man. They have had time to take the measure of life, and have settled down to a routine of preferences and habits which keeps their heads, as a race, above water; and they are presumably visited at appropriate seasons by magic images, which are symbols to them for the world or for the cycles of their destiny. Among groups of men an equilibrium of this moral sort has been sometimes approached — in India, in China, under the Moslem or the Catholic regimens; and if socialist or other panaceas now exercise such a strange influence over men's hearts, it is perhaps because they are impatient of being so long the sport of divers ignorant dogmas and chance adventures, and aspire to live in a stable harmony with nature.

In fact, beneath these various complete systems which have professed but failed to be universal, there is actually a dumb human philosophy, incomplete but solid, prevalent among all civilized peoples. They all practise agriculture, commerce, and mechanical arts, with artificial instruments lately very much complicated; and they necessarily possess, with these arts, a modicum of sanity, morality, and science requisite for carrying them on, and tested by success in doing so.

Is not this human competence philosophy enough? Is it not at least the nucleus of all sound philosophy? In spite of the superficial confusion reigning in the world, is not the universal wisdom of the future actually gathering about this human competence in engineering, in chemistry, in medicine, in war?

It might seem so, since the sort of knowledge involved in the arts, though it may not go very far, is compulsory so far as it goes, and being sanctioned by success, it ought to be permanent and progressive. There is indeed a circle of material events called nature, to which all minds belonging to the same society are responsive in common. Not to be responsive to these facts is simply to be stupid and backward in the arts; those who explore and master their environment cannot help learning what it is. In this direction competence involves enlightenment. Among minds forming a moral society, and able to compare their several opinions, this enlightenment in the expert is coercive over the layman also, because the same facts confront them both. Did not the same facts confront them, communication would be impossible between them, or if communication was reputed to exist by magic there would be no possible conflict or progress among their opinions, because they would not refer to the same events. Even if each declared himself competent and prosperous in his own world, he would know nothing of the world of his neighbors. Their several minds would simply

<sup>1</sup> *The Realm of Essence*. New York, 1927. Reprinted with the permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

be variously or similarly brilliant, like jewels signifying nothing to one another.

If any mind hopes to address another (or even itself) persuasively, as I now wish to address the reader and my own thoughts, it must assume a single system of events to which both minds are responsive, and which includes their respective bodies and actions. Assuming such a common world, it is easy to see how animals may acquire knowledge of it and may communicate it. Material events will arouse in them intuitions conformable to their several stations, faculties, and passions; and their active nature (since they are animals, not plants) will compel them to regard many of the essences so given in intuition as signs for the environment in which they move, modifying this environment and affected by it. This assumption justifies itself at every turn in practice, and establishes in the habits of all men, in proportion to their competence, an appropriate adjustment to the *Realm of Matter*, and in their imagination a suitable picture of the same.

Nevertheless, since the station, faculties, and passions of all men are not identical, these pictures will not be similar. Different observers may be addressed to different regions of nature, or sensitive to different elements in the same region; thus dwellers in distinct planets must evidently have distinct geographies, and the same battle in the clouds will be known to the deaf only as lightning and to the blind only as thunder, each responding to a different constituent of the total event, and not simultaneously. So an eclipse — itself but one aspect of a constellation of events in the heavens — may be known in various entirely different terms; by calculation before it occurs, by sense when it is occurring, by memory immediately afterward, and by reports to posterity. All these indications are entirely inadequate to the facts they reveal in the realm of matter, and qualitatively unlike those facts; they are a set of variegated symbols by which sensitive animals can designate them. Of course, the existence and use of such languages is an added fact in nature — a fact so important and close to the egotism of the animals them-

selves as perhaps to obscure all else in their eyes. Their instinct, indeed, keeps their attention stretched upon the material world that actually surrounds them; but sometimes sensation and language, instead of being passed over like the ticking of the telegraph, may become objects in themselves, in all their absolute musical insignificance; and then animals become idealists. The terms in which they describe things, unlike the things they meant to describe, are purely specious, arbitrary, and ideal; whether visual, tactile, auditory, or conceptual, these terms are essentially *words*. They possess intrinsically, in their own ontological plane, only logical or aesthetic being; and this contains no indication whatever of the material act of speaking, touching, or looking which causes them to appear. All possible terms in mental discourse are essences existing nowhere; visionary equally, whether the faculty that discovers them be sense or thought or the most fantastic fancy.

Such diversity in animal experience taken in itself exhibits sundry qualities or forms of being, a part of the infinite multitude of distinguishable ideal terms which (whether ever revealed to anybody or not) I call the *Realm of Essence*. Pure intuition, in its poetic ecstasy, would simply drink in such of these essences as happened to present themselves; but for a wakeful animal they are signals. They report to his spirit, in very summary and uncertain images, the material events which surround him and which concern his welfare. They may accordingly become terms in knowledge if interpreted judiciously, and if interpreted injudiciously they may become illusions.

The dumb philosophy of the human animal, by which he rears his family and practises the arts and finds his way home, might take definite shape and establish a healthy routine in all his dealings with matter (which includes society), and yet his imaginative experience might retain all its specious originality. The control which the environment exercises over the structure and conduct of animals is decidedly loose. They can live dragging a long chain of idle tricks, diseases, and obsolete organs; and even this loose con-

control fails almost entirely in the case of alternative senses or languages, one of which may serve as well as another. Many species survive together, many rival endowments and customs and religions. And the same control fails altogether in regard to the immaterial essences which those senses or languages call up before the mind's eyes. Adaptation is physical, and it is only the material operation in sensation or speech that can possibly be implicated in the clockwork of nature. The choice of those visionary essences which meantime visit the mind, though regular, is free; they are the transcript of life into discourse, the rhetorical and emotional rendering of existence, which when deepened and purified becomes poetry or music. There can be no reason why differences in these spheres, even among men of the same race, should not be perpetual. It would be mere sluggishness and egotism to regret it. Such differences are not merely added like a vain luxury to a sane recognition, in other conscious terms, of the facts of nature. The "sane" response to nature is by action only and by an economy which nature can accept and weave into her own material economy; but as to the terms of sense and discourse, they are all from the very beginning equally arbitrary, poetical, and (if you choose) mad; yet all equally symptomatic. They vary initially and intangibly from mind to mind, even in expressing the same routine of nature. The imagination which eventually runs to fine art or religion is the same faculty which, under a more direct control of external events, yields vulgar perception. The promptings and the control exercised by matter are continuous in both cases; the dream requires a material dreamer as much as the waking sensation, and the latter is a transcript of his bodily condition just as directly as the dream. Poetic, creative, original fancy is not a secondary form of sensibility, but its first and only form. The same manual restlessness and knack which makes man a manufacturer of toys makes him, when by chance his toys prove useful, a manufacturer of implements. Fine art is thus older than servile labor, and the poetic quality of experience is more fundamental than its scientific value. Existence

may revert at any moment to play, or may run down in idleness; but it is impossible that any work or discovery should ever come about without the accompaniment of pure contemplation, if there is consciousness at all; so that the inherent freedom of the spirit can never be stamped out, so long as spirit endures.

Nor is it safe to imagine that inspired people, because they dream awake in their philosophy, must come to grief in the real world. The great religious and political systems which I mentioned above have had brilliant careers. Their adepts have been far from making worse soldiers than sceptics make, or worse workmen than materialists; nor have they committed suicide or been locked up in the madhouse more often than exact philosophers. Nature drives with a loose rein, and vitality of any sort, even if expressed in fancy, can blunder through many a predicament in which reason would despair. And if the mythical systems decline at last, it is not so much by virtue of the maladjustments underlying their speculative errors — for their myths as a whole are wisely contrived — as because imagination in its freedom abandons these errors for others simply because the prevalent mood of mankind has changed, and it begins dreaming in a different key. Spirit bloweth where it listeth, and continually undoes its own work. This world of free expression, this drift of sensations, passions, and ideas, perpetually kindled and fading in the light of consciousness, I call the *Realm of Spirit*. It is only for the sake of this free life that material competence and knowledge of fact are worth attaining. Facts for a living creature are only instruments; his play-life is his true life. On his working days, when he is attentive to matter, he is only his own servant, preparing the feast. He becomes his own master in his holidays and in his sportive passions. Among these must be counted literature and philosophy, and so much of love, religion, and patriotism as is not an effort to survive materially. In such enthusiasms there is much asseveration; but what they attest is really not the character of the external facts concerned, but only the spiritual uses to which the spirit turns them.

A philosopher cannot wish to be deceived. His philosophy is a declaration of policy in the presence of the facts; and therefore his first care must be to ascertain and heartily to acknowledge all such facts as are relevant to his action or sentiment — not less, and not necessarily more. The pursuit of truth is a form of courage, and a philosopher may well love truth for its own sake, in that he is disposed to confront destiny, whatever it may be, with zest when possible, with resignation when necessary, and not seldom with amusement. The facts to which it is prudent and noble in him to bare his bosom are the morally relevant facts, such as touch his fortunes or his heart, or such as he can alter by his efforts; nor can he really discover other facts. Intuition, or absolute apprehension without media or doubt, is proper to spirit perusing essences; it is impossible to animals confronting facts. Animals know things by exploration, reaction, and prophetic fancy; they therefore can know only such parts and depths of nature as they explore materially and respond to vitally. The brave impulse to search may, indeed, become eager and may wish to recognize no limits; and there may be spirits so utterly practical and serious that the pursuit of material facts absorbs them altogether, to the exclusion of all play of mind. Yet such hectic exactitude is an expression of fear, and automatic rather than rational. Curiosity in an animal always has limits which it is foolish to transgress, because beyond them theory insensibly lapses into verbal myths, and if still taken for true knowledge defeats the honest curiosity that inspired it. What renders knowledge true is fidelity to the object; but in the conduct and fancy of an animal this fidelity can be only rough, summary, dramatic; too much refinement renders it subjective, as does too much haste. This is true of mathematical refinements no less than of verbal pedantries. The realm of matter can never be disclosed either to hypothesis or to sensation in its presumable inmost structure and ultimate extent: the garment of appearance must always fit it loosely and drape it in alien folds, because appearance is essentially an adaptation of facts to the scale and faculty of the observer.

There are also moral limits to seriousness and utter literalness in thought. The tragic compulsion to honor the facts is imposed on man by the destiny of his body, to which that of his mind is attached. But his destiny is not the only theme possible to his thought, nor the most congenial. The best part of this destiny is that he may often forget it; and existence would not be worth preserving if it had to be spent exclusively in anxiety about existence.

It follows from all this that knowledge of facts merely because they are facts cannot be the ultimate object of a philosopher, although he must wish to know the whole unvarnished truth about relevant matters. A liberal mind must live on its own terms, and think in them; it is not inferior to what surrounds it; fact-worship on its part would accordingly be a fault in taste and in morals. What is the function of philosophy? To disclose the absolute truth? But is it credible that the absolute truth should descend into the thoughts of a mortal creature, equipped with a few special senses and with a biased intellect, a man lost amidst millions of his fellows and a prey to the epidemic delusions of the race? Possession of the absolute truth is not merely by accident beyond the range of particular minds; it is incompatible with being alive, because it excludes any particular station, organ, interest, or date of survey: the absolute truth is undiscoverable just because it is not a perspective. Perspectives are essential to animal apprehension; an observer, himself a part of the world he observes, must have a particular station in it; he cannot be equally near to everything, nor internal to anything but himself; of the rest he can only take views, abstracted according to his sensibility and foreshortened according to his interests. Those animals which I was supposing endowed with an adequate philosophy surely do not possess the absolute truth. They read nature in their private idioms. Their imagination, like the human, is doubtless incapable of coping with all things at once, or even with the whole of anything natural. Mind was not created for the sake of discovering the absolute truth. The absolute truth has its own intangible reality, and

scorns to be known. The function of mind is rather to increase the wealth of the universe in the spiritual dimension, by adding appearance to substance and passion to necessity, and by creating all those private perspectives, and those emotions of wonder, adventure, curiosity, and laughter which omniscience would exclude. If omniscience were alone respectable, creation would have been a mistake. The single duty of all creatures would then be to repair that creative error, by abolishing their several senses and desires and becoming indistinguishable from one another and from nothing at all; and if all creation could attain to this sort of salvation, the absolute substance, in whose honor all else had been abandoned, would become unconscious. The time will doubtless come for each of us, if not for the universe at large, to cease from care; but our passage through life will have added a marvellous episode to the tale of things; and our distinction and glory, as well as our sorrow, will have lain in being something in particular, and in knowing what it is.

Thus if there is a sense in which all special and separable existence is illusion, there is another sense in which illusion is itself a special and separable existence; and if this be condemned for not being absolute substance and for excluding knowledge of the absolute truth, it may also be prized for these very reasons. Sensation is true enough. All experience yields some acquaintance with the realm of essence, and some perspective of the material world; and this would always be a true perspective (since things seen at that angle and with that organ really look like that) if the appearance were not stretched to cover more than it covers in reality. Of such true perspectives the simplest and most violently foreshortened may be as good as the most complicated, the most poetical or pictorial as good as the most scientific, not only aesthetically but even cognitively; because it may report the things concerned on that human scale on which we need to measure them, and in this relation may report them correctly. Nor is the error which such very partial knowledge may breed, when inflated by precipitate judgments and vanity, alto-

gether unavoidable. The variety of senses in man, the precarious rule of his instincts, and the range of his memory and fancy, give rise in him eventually to some sense of error and even of humor. He is almost able to pierce the illusions of his animal dogmatism, to surrender the claim to inspiration, and in one sense to transcend the relativity of his knowledge and the flightiness of his passions by acknowledging them with a good grace.

This relativity does not imply that there is no absolute truth. On the contrary, if there were no absolute truth, all-inclusive and eternal, the desultory views taken from time to time by individuals would themselves be absolute. They would be irrelevant to one another, and incomparable in point of truth, each being without any object but the essence which appeared in it. If views can be more or less correct, and perhaps complementary to one another, it is because they refer to the same system of nature, the complete description of which, covering the whole past and the whole future, would be the absolute truth. This absolute truth is no living view, no actual judgment, but merely that segment of the realm of essence which happens to be illustrated in existence. The question whether a given essence belongs to this segment or not — that is, whether a suggested idea is or is not true — has a tragic importance for an animal intent on discovering and describing what exists, or has existed, or is destined to exist in his world. He seldom has leisure to dwell on essences apart from their presumable truth; even their beauty and dialectical pattern seem to him rather trivial, unless they are significant of facts in the realm of matter, controlling human destiny. I therefore give a special name to this tragic segment of the realm of essence and call it the *Realm of Truth*.

The knowledge of relevant truth, while it has this fundamental moral importance, is far from being our only concern in the life of reason. It comes in only incidentally, in so far as a staunch and comprehensive knowledge of things makes a man master of things, and independent of them in a great measure. The business of a philosopher is rather to be a good shepherd of his thoughts. The

share of attention and weight which he gives to physical speculation or to history or to psychology will express his race and disposition, or the spirit of his times; everyone is free to decide how far material arts and sciences are worth pursuing, and with what free creations they shall be surrounded. Young and ardent minds, and races without accumulated possessions, tend to poetry and metaphysics; they neglect or falsify the truth in the heat of their imaginative passion. Old men, and old nations, incline to mix their wine with larger dilutions of reality; and they prefer history, biography, politics, and humorous fictions; because in all these, while the facts are neither conceived nor tested scientifically, the savor of earth and of experience remains dominant.

By the philosopher, however, both the homeliest brew and the most meticulous science are only relished as food for the spirit. Even if defeated in the pursuit of truth, the spirit may be victorious in self-expression and self-knowledge; and if a philosopher could be nothing else, he might still be a moralist and a poet. He will do well to endow his vision of things with all the force, color, and scope of which his soul is capable. Then if he misses the truth of nature, as in many things is probable, he will at least have achieved a work of imagination. In such a case the universe, without being mapped as a whole in the fancy, will be enriched at one point, by the happy life enacted there, in one human focus of art and vision. The purer and more distinct the spirit which a philosopher can bring to light in his thoughts, the greater the intellectual achievement; and the greater the moral achievement also, if the policy so set forth is actually carried out in his whole life and conversation.

As for me, in stretching my canvas and taking up my palette and brush, I am not vexed that masters should have painted before me in styles which I have no power and no occasion to imitate; nor do I expect future generations to be satisfied with always repainting my pictures. Agreement is sweet, being a form of friendship; it is also a stimulus to insight, and helpful, as contradiction is not; and I certainly hope to find agreement

in some quarters. Yet I am not much concerned about the number of those who may be my friends in the spirit, nor do I care about their chronological distribution, being as much pleased to discover one intellectual kinsman in the past as to imagine two in the future. That in the world at large alien natures should prevail, innumerable and perhaps infinitely various, does not disturb me. On the contrary, I hope fate may manifest to them such objects as they need and can love; and although my sympathy with them cannot be so vivid as with men of my own mind, and in some cases may pass into antipathy, I do not conceive that they are wrong or inferior for being different from me, or from one another. If God and nature can put up with them, why should I raise an objection? But let them take care; for if they have sinned against the facts (as I suspect is often the case) and are kicking against the pricks of matter, they must expect to be brought to confusion on the day of doom, or earlier. Not only will their career be brief and troubled, which is the lot of all flesh, but their faith will be stultified by events, which is a needless and eternal ignominy for the spirit. But if somehow, in their chosen terms, they have balanced their accounts with nature, they are to be heartily congratulated on their moral diversity. It is pleasant to think that the fertility of spirit is inexhaustible, if matter only gives it a chance, and that the worst and most successful fanaticism cannot turn the moral world permanently into a desert.

The pity of it is only that contrary souls should often fight for the same bodies, natural or political, as if space and matter in the universe were inadequate (as on earth indeed they are) for every essence in its own time to see the sun. But existence is precipitate and blind; it cannot bide its time; and the seeds of form are often so wantonly and thickly scattered that they strangle one another, call one another weeds and tares, and can live only in the distracted effort to keep others from living. Seldom does any soul live through a single and lively summer in its native garden, suffered and content to bloom. Philosophers and nations cannot be happy



unless separate; then they may be single-minded at home and tolerant abroad. If they have a spirit in them which is worth cultivating (which is not always the case) they need to entrench it in some consecrated citadel, where it may come to perfect expression. Human beings allowed to run loose are vowed to perdition, since they are too individual to agree and too gregarious to stand alone. Hence the rareness of any polity founded on wisdom, like that of which ancient Greece affords some glimpses, and the equal rareness of a pure and complete philosophy, such as that of Dante or of Spinoza, conceived in some moment of wonderful unanimity or of fortunate isolation.

My own philosophy, I venture to think, is well knit in the same sense, in spite of perhaps seeming eclectic and of leaving so many doors open both in physics and in morals. My eclecticism is not helplessness before sundry influences; it is detachment and firmness in taking each thing simply for what it is. Openness, too, is a form of architecture. The doctrine that all moralities equally are but expressions of animal life is a tremendous dogma, at once blessing and purging all mortal passions; and the conviction that there can be no knowledge save animal faith positing external facts, and that this natural science is but a human symbol for those facts, also has an immense finality: the renunciation and the assurance in it are both radical and both invincible.

In confessing that I have merely touched the hem of nature's garment, I feel that virtue

from her has passed into me, and made me whole. There is no more bewitching moment in childhood than when the boy, to whom someone is slyly propounding some absurdity, suddenly looks up and smiles. The brat has understood. A thin deception was being practiced on him, in the hope that he might not be deceived, but by deriding it might prove he had attained to a man's stature and a man's wit. It was but banter prompted by love. So with this thin deception practiced upon me by nature. The great Sphinx in posing her riddle and looking so threatening and mysterious is secretly hoping that I may laugh. She is not a riddle but a fact; the words she whispers are not oracles but prattle. Why take her residual silence, which is inevitable, for a challenge or a menace? She does not know how to speak more plainly. Her secret is as great a secret to herself as to me. If I perceive it, and laugh, instantly she draws in her claws. A tremor runs through her enigmatical body; and if she were not of stone she would embrace her boyish discoverer, and yield herself to him altogether. It is so simple to exist, to be what one is for no reason, to engulf all questions and answers in the rush of being that sustains them. Henceforth nature and spirit can play together like mother and child, each marvellously pleasant to the other, yet deeply unintelligible; for as she created him she knew not how, merely by smiling in her dreams, so in awaking and smiling back he somehow understands her; at least he is all the understanding she has of herself.

## CORRESPONDENCE OF WILLIAM JAMES AND GEORGE SANTAYANA<sup>1</sup>

IN 1900, having read Santayana's *Poetry of Religion*, James wrote to Palmer as follows:

"The great event in my life recently has been the reading of Santayana's book. Although I absolutely reject the Platonism of it, I have literally squealed with delight at the imperturbable perfection with which the

position is laid down on page after page. . . . It is refreshing to see a representative of moribund Latinity rise up and administer such reproof to us barbarians in the hour of our triumph. . . . Nevertheless, how fantastic a philosophy! . . . as if the 'world of values' were independent of existence. It is only as

<sup>1</sup> Ralph Barton Perry, *The Thought and Character of William James*, vol. II, pp. 319-21. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1935.



being that one thing is better than another. The idea of darkness is as good as that of light, as ideas. There is more value in light's being. And the exquisite consolation, when you have ascertained the badness of all fact, in knowing that badness is inferior to goodness, to the end — it only rubs the pessimism in. A man whose egg at breakfast turns out always bad says to himself, 'Well, bad and good are not the same, anyhow.' That is just the trouble! Moreover, when you come down to the facts, what do your harmonious and integral ideal systems prove to be? in the concrete? Always things burst by the growing content of experience. Dramatic unities; laws of versification; ecclesiastical systems; scholastic doctrines. Bah! Give me Walt Whitman and Browning ten times over, much as the perverse ugliness of the latter at times irritates me, and intensely as I have enjoyed Santayana's attack. The barbarians are in the line of mental growth, and those who do insist that the ideal and the real are dynamically continuous are those by whom the world is to be saved. But I'm nevertheless delighted that the other view, always existing in the world, should at last have found so splendidly impertinent an expression among ourselves."

The letter containing these paragraphs was sent by Palmer to Santayana, who replied as follows:

"I see that you have discovered me in the *Poetry and Religion* more than in my verses or the *Sense of Beauty*, although I fancy there is no less of me in those other books. But there is more to come, and although I daresay you won't like the *Life of Reason* much better than you like my attitude hitherto, I think you will find that, apart from temperament, I am nearer to you than you now believe. What you say, for instance, about the value of the good lying in its *existence*, and about the continuity of the world of values with that of fact, is not different from what I should admit. Ideals would be irrelevant if they were not natural entelechies, if they were not called for by something that exists and if, consequently, their realization would not be a present and actual good. And the point in

insisting that all the eggs at breakfast are rotten is nothing at all except the consequent possibility and endeavor to find good eggs for the morrow. The only thing I object to and absolutely abhor is the assertion that all the eggs indiscriminately are good because the hen laid them.

"You tax me several times with impertinence and superior airs. I wonder if you realize the years of suppressed irritation which I have passed in the midst of an unintelligible, sanctimonious, and often disingenuous Protestantism, which is thoroughly alien and repulsive to me, and the need I have of joining hands with something far away from it and far above it. My Catholic sympathies didn't justify me in speaking out because I felt them to be merely sympathies, and not to have a rational and human backing; but the study of Plato and Aristotle has given me confidence and, backed by such an authority as they and all who have accepted them represent, I have a right to be sincere, to be absolutely objective and unapologetic, because it is not I that speak but human reason that speaks in me. Truly the Babel in which we live has nothing in it so respectable as to put on the defensive the highest traditions of the human mind. No doubt, as you say, Latinity is moribund, as Greece itself was when it transmitted to the rest of the world the seeds of its own rationalism; and for that reason there is the more need of transplanting and propagating straight thinking among the peoples who hope to be masters of the world in the immediate future. Otherwise they will be its physical masters only, and the Muses will fly over them to alight among some future race that may understand the gods better."

"Now that I am launched I will say a word about some of the criticisms in your letter. You are very generous; I feel that you want to give me credit for everything good that can possibly be found in my book. But you don't yet see my philosophy, nor my temper from the inside; your praise, like your blame, touches only the periphery, accidental aspects presented to this or that preconceived and disparate interest. The style is good, the tone is supercilious, here is a shrewd passage,

&c., &c. And you say I am less hospitable than Emerson. Of course. Emerson might pipe his wood-notes and chirp at the universe most blandly, his genius might be tender and profound and Hamlet-like, and that is all beyond my range and contrary to my purpose. I am a Latin, and nothing seems serious to me except politics, except the sort of men that your ideas will involve and the sort of happiness they will be capable of. The rest is exquisite moonshine. Religion in particular was *found out* more than two hundred years ago, and it seems to me intolerable that we should still be condemned to ignore the fact and to give the parson and the 'idealists' a monopoly of indignation and of contemptuous dogmatism. It is they, not we, that are the pest; and while I wish to be just and to understand people's feelings, wherever they are at all significant, I am deliberately minded to be contemptuous toward what seems to me contemptible, and not to have any share in the conspiracy of mock respect by which intellectual ignominy and moral stagnation are kept up in our society. What did Emerson know or care about the passionate insanities and political disasters which religion, for instance, has so often been another name for? He could give that name to his last personal intuition, and ignore what it stands for and what it expresses in the world. It is the latter that absorbs me; and I care too much about mortal happiness to be interested in

the charming vegetation of cancer-microbes in the system — except with the idea of suppressing it.

"I have read practically no reviews of my book, so that I don't know if anyone has felt in it something which, I am sure, is there. I mean the *tears*. 'Sunt lachrimae rerum, ac mentem mortalia tangunt.' Not that I care to moan over the gods of Greece, turned into the law of gravity, or over the stained glass of cathedrals, broken to let in the sunlight and the air. It is not the past that seems to me affecting, entrancing, or pitiful to lose. It is the ideal. It is that vision of perfection that we just catch, or for a moment embody in some work of art, or in some idealized reality; it is the concomitant inspiration of life, always various, always beautiful, hardly ever expressible in its fullness. And it is my adoration of this real and familiar good, this love often embraced but always elusive, that makes me detest the Absolutes and the dragooned myths by which people try to cancel the passing ideal, or to denaturalize it. That is an inhumanity, an impiety, that I can't bear. And much of the irritation which I may betray and which, I assure you, is much greater than I let it seem, comes of affection. It comes of exasperation at seeing the only things that are beautiful or worth having, treated as if they were of no account."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Letter from George Santayana to William James, *The Thought and Character of William James*, vol. II, pp. 401-02, 403.

# Irving Babbitt

(1865-1933)

AFTER his graduation from Harvard in 1889, Babbitt continued his studies in Paris. On his return to this country, he taught at Williams College and later at Harvard. His best-known writings are *The New Laokoön* (1910), *Masters of French Criticism* (1912), *Rousseau and Romanticism* (1919), and *Democracy and Leadership* (1924).

Babbitt devoted many years to the study of Rousseau and to an examination of the influence of Romanticism on modern literature and society. From this study came the convictions which some years ago were crystallized in the New Humanist movement. Babbitt, together with Paul Elmer More, opened warfare on modern naturalism which stresses man's natural goodness, repudiates the traditional dualisms, and glorifies science. The present selection is given as an outstanding criticism of the work of such men as Santayana, Woodbridge, Dewey, and others, both realists and pragmatists, who are united in their naturalism.

## HUMANISM: AN ESSAY AT DEFINITION<sup>1</sup>

II

We have seen thus far that the word humanist has two main meanings — an historical meaning in its application to the scholars who turned away from the Middle Ages to the Greeks and Romans, and a psychological meaning, as one may say, that derives directly from the historical one: humanists in this latter sense are those who, in any age, aim at proportionateness through a cultivation of the law of measure. Keeping this definition in mind, we should now be prepared to deal with the confusions in the use of the

word of which I spoke at the beginning. These confusions have arisen from its misapplication to various types of naturalists and super-naturalists, especially the former.

For example, the eminent orientalist, M. Sylvain Lévi, has in a recent book used the term humanism in speaking of persons as far apart as Buddha and Rousseau. Buddha, it is true, had his humanistic side: he recommended that one follow a *via media* between asceticism and self-indulgence. But, unlike Confucius, he is in his primary emphasis not humanistic, but religious. The association of humanism with Rousseau is especially un-

<sup>1</sup> *Humanism and America*, edited by Norman Foerster. New York, 1930. Reprinted with the permission of Farrar and Rinehart.

justifiable. Rousseau was, in the current sense of the word, a highly vital individual, but he cannot be properly regarded as either religious or humanistic. He attacked both humanism and religion in their traditional forms, and instead of working out some modern equivalent for these forms, helped to usher in the era of free naturalistic expansion in the midst of which we are still living. He was above all for free temperamental expansion. He was himself emotionally expansive to a degree that was incompatible not only with artificial but with real decorum. He encouraged the humanitarian hope that brotherhood among men may be based on emotional overflow. In general the most serious confusion in the use of the word humanist has arisen from its appropriation by the humanitarians. Walt Whitman was, for instance, highly Rousseauistic in his notion of brotherhood. We should therefore know what to think of the assertion of Mr. Lewis Mumford that Walt Whitman was a true humanist; also of the assumption of the term by the left-wing Unitarians and other Protestants who have been moving toward humanitarianism.

The humanitarian has favored not only temperamental expansion; he has also, as a rule, favored the utmost expansion of scientific knowledge with a view to realizing the Baconian ideal. Perhaps indeed the chief driving power behind the humanitarian movement has been the confidence inspired in man by the progressive control physical science has enabled him to acquire over the forces of nature. It goes without saying that the humanist is not hostile to science as such, but only to a science that has overstepped its due bounds, and in general to every form of naturalism, whether rationalistic or emotional, that sets up as a substitute for humanism or religion. In the case of such encroachments there is not only a quarrel between the naturalist and the humanist, but a quarrel of first principles. When first principles are involved the law of measure is no longer applicable. One should not be moderate in dealing with error. I have pointed out elsewhere the danger of confounding the humanistic attitude with that of the Laodicean.

The reason for the radical clash between the humanist and the purely naturalistic philosopher is that the humanist requires a centre to which he may refer the manifold of experience; and this the phenomenal world does not supply. In getting his centre the humanist may appeal primarily to tradition, or as I have said, to intuition. In the latter case he will need to submit to a searching Socratic dialectic the word intuition itself — to distinguish between intuitions of the One and intuitions of the Many. Otherwise he will run the risk of not being a modern but only a modernist. The contrast between modern and modernist is not unlike that between Socrates and the sophists. Both modern and modernist are under compulsion to accept in some form the ancient maxim that man is the measure of all things. Only, the measure of the modern is based on a perception of the something in himself that is set above the flux and that he possesses in common with other men; whereas the perception with which the modernist is chiefly concerned, to the subversion of any true measure whatsoever, is of the divergent and the changeable both within and without himself. The present menace to humanism, it has been said, is less from its enemies than from those who profess to be its friends. Thus Mr. F. C. S. Schiller of Oxford proclaims himself a humanist, and at the same time seeks to show that the true humanist was not Socrates but that precursor of recent "flowing" philosophers, Protagoras.

It should be noted that many of our votaries of change and mobility are more emotional than Protagoras or any other Greek sophist. They tend to make, not their own thoughts, but their own feelings the measure of all things. This indulgence in feeling has been encouraged by the sentimentalists who have discovered in feeling not only the quintessentially human element, but, as I said in speaking of Rousseau, the ultimate ground of fraternal union. In our own time, partly perhaps as a result of the psychoanalytical probing of the sources of the emotional life in the subconscious, there is a growing distrust of the sentimentalist. To be sure, one may, according to the psychoanalyst, turn the

emotions to good account by a process of "sublimation." Why not escape still more completely from one's complexes and infantile survivals by adjusting oneself to the cosmic order that is revealed to the scientific investigator in his laboratory? One may thus cease to be ego-centric and become truly mature and disinterested. This is the attitude that Mr. Walter Lippmann recommends in *A Preface to Morals*, and it is this attitude that, by a flagrant misuse of the word, he terms "humanism." It is well that a man should adjust himself to the reality of the natural order and, as a preliminary, should strive to be objective in the scientific sense; but humanism calls for an adjustment to a very different order that is also "real" and "objective" in its own way. It insists in short that there is a "law for Man" as well as a "law for thing," and is in this sense dualistic. Mr. Lippmann's attempt to base ethics on monistic postulates is, from either a religious or humanistic point of view, a revival of the stoical error. Yet he would have us believe that anyone who has become disinterested after the scientific fashion has got the equivalent not only of humanism but of "high religion." By thus dissimulating the gap between the wisdom of the ages and the wisdom of the laboratory, he is flattering some of the most dangerous illusions of the present time. He escapes from the main humanitarian tendency to give to feeling a primacy that does not belong to it, only to encourage its other main tendency to accord to physical science a hegemony to which it is not entitled.

It is self-evident that humanitarianism of the scientific or utilitarian type, with its glorification of the specialist who is ready to sacrifice his rounded development, if only he can contribute his mite to "progress," is at odds with the humanistic ideal of poise and proportion. The religious pretensions of humanitarianism of this type are even more unacceptable, at least if one understands by religion anything resembling the great traditional faiths. The Baconian has inclined from the outset to substitute an outer for an inner working — the effort of the individual upon himself — that religion has, in some

form or other, always required. The result has been to encourage the acquisitive life and also the pursuit of material instead of spiritual "comfort." A typical example of this utilitarian trend is Professor T. N. Carver's *Religion Worth Having*, in which he so exalts the "productive life" that religion is all but identified with thrift. At this rate it may soon be possible to get one's religion securely tucked away in a safe-deposit drawer! One should, however, be grateful to Professor Carver for not having called himself a humanist.

It does not seem possible to supply from the sentimental or Rousseauistic side of the humanitarian movement the elements that are, religiously speaking, absent from its utilitarian side. The nature to which the Rousseauist invites one to return is, as I have sought to show elsewhere, only a projection of the idyllic imagination. In the state of nature or some similar state thus projected, in other words in Arcadia, man is "good." Practically this has meant that there is in the natural man an altruistic impulse that may prevail over his egoism. The upshot of this myth of man's natural goodness has been to discredit the traditional controls, both humanistic and religious. Humility, conversion, decorum, all go by the board in favor of unrestricted temperamental overflow. The crucial question is whether the immense machinery of power that has resulted from the efforts of the utilitarians can be made, on this basis of unlimited expansion, to serve disinterested ends. Everything converges indeed on both sides of the humanitarian movement upon the idea of service. If it can be shown that there has been no vital omission in the passage from the service of God to the service of man, one may safely side with all the altruists from the third Earl of Shaftesbury to John Dewey. Unfortunately a formidable mass of evidence has been accumulating (the Great War was for many a convincing demonstration) that, in the natural man as he exists in the real world and not in some romantic dreamland, the will to power is more than a match for the will to service.

The benefits that have ensued from the

major concentration upon the natural order that has been under way since the Renaissance have been numerous and dazzling. We are still celebrating these benefits under the name of progress. It is no longer possible, however, to allay the suspicion that the price which has been paid for progress of this type has been a growing superficiality in dealing with the still more important problems of the human order. "Nothing is more certain," says Burke in a well-known passage, "than that our manners, our civilization, and all the good things which are connected with manners and with civilization, have, in this European world of ours, depended for ages upon two principles; and were indeed the result of both combined; I mean the spirit of a gentleman and the spirit of religion." The whole debate would seem to narrow down to the question whether it is possible to secure on utilitarian-sentimental lines a valid equivalent for Burke's two principles. As for the "spirit of a gentleman," its decline is so obvious as scarcely to admit of argument. It has even been maintained that in America, the country in which the collapse of traditional standards has been most complete, the gentleman is at a positive disadvantage in the world of practical affairs; he is likely to get on more quickly if he assumes the "mucker pose." According to William James, usually taken to be the representative American philosopher, the very idea of the gentleman has about it something slightly satanic. "The prince of darkness," says James, "may be a gentleman, as we are told he is, but, whatever the God of earth and heaven is, he can surely be no gentleman."

As for the "spirit of religion," I have already glanced at its humanitarian substitute. The humanitarian maintains that the spirit that appears in Christianity will, if disengaged from mere dogma, be found to be something very similar to his own spirit of service. One should at least be able to understand the position of the person who has become convinced that there is a supernatural element in genuine Christianity, lost in the passage from the old dispensation to the new, for which mere altruism is no substitute,

and who therefore takes his stand on the side of tradition. Dogmatic and revealed religion, he argues, was alone capable of rescuing the ancient world from a decadent naturalism. It alone affords an avenue of escape from the analogous situation that confronts the world today.

### III

The relation of the humanist to this religious traditionalist can scarcely be defined too carefully. Between the humanist and the humanitarian, I have said, there is a clash of first principles. Between the humanist and the authentic Christian, on the other hand, there is room for important co-operation. To be sure, many of the leaders of the early Church were satisfied with nothing short of a stark supernaturalism, and inclined to reject the genuinely humanistic elements of the ancient civilization along with its naturalistic errors. But the orthodox attitude has, in spite of the difficulties of reconciling otherworldliness with a merely secular wisdom, come to be one of friendliness to the classical humanities. Mr. T. S. Eliot is probably close to this attitude when he maintains that humanism is of very great value, but only in subordination to the historical Church. As an independent doctrine, at least in any large way, it is, he maintains, ineffective. A broad survey of the past does not, however, confirm the view that humanism is thus either precarious or parasitical. The two most notable manifestations of the humanistic spirit that the world has seen, that in ancient Greece and that in Confucian China, did not have the support of Christianity or any other form of revealed religion. Take again the humanism of seventeenth-century France: the ideal of the finely poised gentleman who "does not plume himself on anything" was often allied with Christianity ("devout humanism"), but it was also found among the free-thinkers ("libertines") who were hostile to every form of belief in the supernatural.

In general, why should not the humanist, it may be asked, devote himself quietly to his own task — that of effecting an adjustment between the law of measure and the ever-novel emergencies of actual living, and

at the same time refuse to take sides too decisively in the great debate between the naturalists and the supernaturalists? If pressed too hard by the supernaturalists in particular, why should he not reply in the words of Pope:

Presume not God to scan;  
The proper study of mankind is man?

One must, however, admit an element of truth in the assertion of Plato that things human cannot be properly known without a previous insight into things divine. Another thinker, Pascal, who had this religious insight in a high degree, though combined with a form of dogma peculiarly alien to most modern men, declared that unless man has the support of the supernatural, unless in short he attains to true humility, he will fall fatally either into the stoic pride or else, through the intermediary stage of scepticism, into the epicurean relaxation. The whole question bristles with difficulties: one thinks of the immense and, on the whole, salutary influence that two Roman humanists, Cicero and Horace, have exercised on occidental culture, though, to adopt Pascal's classification, the humanism of Cicero leaned unduly to the stoical side, that of Horace to the epicurean. Yet I believe that the humanist will finally be forced to recognize that there is truth in Pascal's contention, that he will have to take sides in the debate between naturalists and supernaturalists, however much he may deplore the frequent failure of both of these fell antagonists to do justice to the immense range of human experience that is subject primarily to the law of measure.

For my own part, I range myself unhesitatingly on the side of the supernaturalists. Though I see no evidence that humanism is necessarily ineffective apart from dogmatic and revealed religion, there is, as it seems to me, evidence that it gains immensely in effectiveness when it has a background of religious insight. One is conscious of such a background, for example, in Sophocles, who ranks high among occidental humanists, as well as in Confucius, the chief exponent of the humanistic idea in the Orient. The phrase religious insight is in itself vague.

Is it not possible to give the phrase a definite content without departing from the critical attitude? One may be helped to such a definition by asking oneself what element has tended to fall out of the life of the modern man with the decline of the traditional disciplines. According to Mr. Walter Lippmann, the conviction the modern man has lost is that "there is an immortal essence presiding like a king over his appetites." But why abandon the affirmation of such an "essence" or higher will to the mere traditionalist? Why not affirm it first of all as a psychological fact, one of the immediate data of consciousness, a perception so primordial that, compared with it, the deterministic denials of man's moral freedom are only a metaphysical dream? One would thus be in a position to perform a swift flanking movement on the behaviorists and other naturalistic psychologists who are to be regarded at present as among the chief enemies of human nature. One might at the same time be in a fair way to escape from the modernist dilemma and become a thoroughgoing and complete modern.

The philosophers have often debated the question of the priority of will or intellect in man. The quality of will that I am discussing and that rightly deserves to be accounted super-rational has, however, been associated in traditional Christianity not primarily with man's will, but with God's will in the form of grace. The theologians have indulged in many unprofitable subtleties apropos of grace. One cannot afford, however, as has been the modern tendency, to discard the psychological truth of the doctrine along with these subtleties. The higher will must simply be accepted as a mystery that may be studied in its practical effects, but that, in its ultimate nature, is incapable of formulation. Herein the higher will is not peculiar. "All things," according to the scholastic maxim, "end in a mystery" (*Omnia exeunt in mysterium*). The man of science is increasingly willing to grant that the reality behind the phenomena he is studying not only eludes him, but must in the nature of the case ever elude him. He no longer holds, for example, as his more dogmatic forebears of the nineteenth century inclined to do, that the

mechanistic hypothesis, valuable as it has proved itself to be as a laboratory technique, is absolutely true; its truth is, he admits, relative and provisional.

The person who declines to turn the higher will to account until he is sure he has grasped its ultimate nature is very much on a level with the man who should refuse to make practical use of electrical energy until he is certain he has an impeccable theory of electricity. Negatively one may say of the higher will, without overstepping the critical attitude, that it is not the absolute, nor again the categorical imperative; not the organic and still less the mechanical; finally, not the "ideal" in the current sense of that term. Positively one may define it as the higher immediacy that is known in its relation to the lower immediacy — the merely temperamental man with his impressions and emotions and expansive desires — as a power of vital control (*frein vital*). Failure to exercise this control is the spiritual indolence that is for both Christian and Buddhist a chief source, if not the chief source, of evil. Though Aristotle, after the Greek fashion, gives the primacy not to will but to mind, the power of which I have been speaking is surely related to his "energy of soul," the form of activity distinct from a mere outer working, deemed by him appropriate for the life of leisure that he proposes as the goal of a liberal education. Happiness, which is for him the end of ends, is itself, he tells us, "a kind of working." Here is a difference, one may note in passing, between a true humanist like Aristotle and the epicurean who also has his doctrine of moderation, and so often sets up as a humanist. It is no doubt well, as the epicurean urges, so to indulge in present pleasures that they may not be injurious to future ones. To employ the trivial illustration, it is well to avoid overeating at dinner lest one impair one's appetite for supper. But the meaning of the Aristotelian working is that one should not be content with transitory pleasure at all, but should be striving constantly to rise from a lower to a higher range of satisfactions. The energy of soul that has served on the humanistic level for mediation appears on the religious level in

the form of meditation. Religion may of course mean a great deal more than meditation. At the same time humanistic mediation that has the support of meditation may correctly be said to have a religious background. Mediation and meditation are after all only different stages in the same ascending "path" and should not be arbitrarily separated.

This question comes up especially in connection with the rôle of enthusiasm. Humanism is not primarily enthusiastic, whereas religion is. There is a touch of enthusiasm even in Aristotle, in general one of the coolest and most detached of thinkers, when he comes to the passage from the humanistic to the religious level. "We should not," he says, "pay heed to those who bid us think as mortals, but should, as far as may be, seek to make ourselves immortal." At the same time it must be admitted that even a true religious enthusiasm is hard to combine with poise and that this true enthusiasm has many counterfeits. "For one inspired, ten thousand are possessed," wrote the Earl of Roscommon, having in mind the religious zealots of the English seventeenth century. The neo-classic gentleman was therefore as a rule distinctly unfriendly to the enthusiast. The humanist, however, should not deny enthusiasm but merely insist on defining it. He cannot afford to be an enthusiast in Rousseau's sense; on the other hand, he should not neglect the truth of Rousseau's saying that "cold reason has never done anything illustrious."

Though one should, in my judgment, side with the oriental as against Aristotle and the Greeks in giving priority to the higher will over mind, especially if one attaches importance to the supreme religious virtue, humility, it yet remains true that this will must be exercised intelligently. Granted that the existence in man of a power of control may be affirmed, quite apart from any dogma, as a psychological fact, the individual must nevertheless go beyond this fact if he is to decide rightly how far he needs to exercise control in any particular instance: in short, he needs standards. In getting his standards the humanist of the best type is not content



to acquiesce inertly in tradition. He is aware that there is always entering into life an element of vital novelty and that the wisdom of the past, invaluable though it is, cannot therefore be brought to bear too literally on the present. He knows that, though standards are necessary, they should be held flexibly and that, to accomplish this feat, he must make the most difficult of all mediations, that between the One and the Many. The chief enemies of the humanist are the pragmatists and other philosophers of the flux who simplify this problem for themselves by dismissing the One, which is actually a living intuition, as a metaphysical abstraction.

Whatever reality man achieves in his dealings with either the human or the natural order is dependent, I have tried to show elsewhere, on the degree to which he establishes a correct relationship between the part of himself that perceives, the part that conceives, and the part that discriminates. The part that conceives, that reaches out and seizes likenesses and analogies, may be defined as imagination; the part that discriminates and tests the unity thus apprehended from the point of view of its truth may be defined as analytical reason; the part that perceives is, in the case of the humanist, primarily concerned with the something in man that is set above the phenomenal order and that I have already defined as a power of control. One may say therefore that standards result from a co-operation between imagination and reason, dealing with the more specifically human aspects of experience, and that these standards should be pressed into the service of the higher will with a view to imposing a right direction on the emotions and expansive desires of the natural man. The supreme goal of ethical endeavor, as Plato pointed out long ago, is that one should come to like and dislike the right things.

#### IV

Humanism, even humanism of the distinctly individualistic type I have been outlining, may, as I have already suggested, work in harmony with traditional religion. In that case there must be a careful determination of boundaries. Though humanism and

religion both lie on the same ascending path from the naturalistic flux, one must insist that each has its separate domain. It is an error to hold that humanism can take the place of religion. Religion indeed may more readily dispense with humanism than humanism with religion. Humanism gains greatly by having a religious background in the sense I have indicated; whereas religion, for the man who has actually renounced the world, may very conceivably be all in all. On the other hand, the man who sets out to live religiously in the secular order without having recourse to the wisdom of the humanist is likely to fall into vicious confusions — notably, into a confusion between the things of God and the things of Caesar. The Catholic Church has therefore been well inspired in rounding out its religious doctrine with the teaching of Aristotle and other masters of the law of measure. It can scarcely fail to recognize that the position of the positive and critical humanist is sound *as far as it goes*. It follows that the Catholic and the non-Catholic should be able to co-operate on the humanistic level. A like co-operation should be possible between the humanist and the members of other Christian communions who have not as yet succumbed entirely to humanitarianism.

I have tried to show that the weakness of humanitarianism from both the humanistic and the religious point of view is that it holds out the hope of securing certain spiritual benefits — for example, peace and brotherhood — without any ascent from the naturalistic level. The positive and critical humanist would seem to have a certain tactical superiority over the religious traditionalist in dealing with the defects of the humanitarian programme. In the battle of ideas, as in other forms of warfare, the advantage is on the side of those who take the offensive. The modernists have broken with tradition partly because it is not sufficiently immediate, partly because it is not sufficiently experimental. Why not meet them on their own ground and, having got rid of every ounce of unnecessary metaphysical and theological baggage, oppose to them something that is both immediate and experimental — namely

the presence in man of a higher will or power of control? I use the word experimental deliberately by way of protest against the undue narrowing of this word by the scientific naturalists to observation of the phenomenal order and of man only in so far as he comes under this order. One should also protest against the restriction of the term reality to observation of this type. Some of the most monstrous mutilations of reality that the world has ever seen are being perpetrated at this moment — for example, by the behavioristic psychologists — in the name of the “real.” At all events everything in the modernist movement will be found to converge either upon the rôle of feeling or upon the rôle of experiment, and the final question raised in either case is that of the will. As a result of the combined influence of the various types of naturalists, the present age is at once more emotional and more mechanical than any other of which we have historical record. By mechanical I refer primarily not to the multiplication of machines in the outer world but to the mechanizing of mind itself. An effective procedure is, as I have said, to meet the mechanist on his own ground and point out to him that he is unduly dogmatic, if he holds that his hypothesis is absolutely valid even for the natural order, and that, if he goes further and seeks to make it cover the whole of experience, to impose a deterministic nightmare on the human spirit itself, he is abandoning the experimental attitude for an even more objectionable form of dogmatism.

Similarly one should meet the emotionalist on his favorite ground of immediacy. Inasmuch as the higher immediacy has been largely associated in the Christian Occident with the operation of God’s will, the substitution for it of the lower immediacy has meant practically the setting up of a subrational parody of grace. In order to make this parody plausible, the emotionalist has had recourse to the usual arts of the sophist, chief among which are a juggling with half-truths and a tampering with general terms. I have commented elsewhere on the way in which words like “virtue” and “conscience” have been so twisted from their traditional

meaning as to eliminate the dualistic element that both humanism and religion require. If there is to be any recovery of the truths of dualism, at least along critical lines, a battle royal will need to be fought over the word “nature” itself; here, if anywhere, one needs to practice a Socratic dichotomy.

The half-truth that has been used to compromise religion in particular is that, though religion is in itself something quite distinct from emotion, it is in its ordinary manifestations very much mixed up with emotion. I give an example of this error in its latest and fashionable form. In a very learned and, in some respects, able book, the Reverend N. P. Williams seeks to show that St. Augustine’s experience of grace or, what amounts to the same thing, his love of God was only a “sublimation” of his “lust.” St. Augustine was a very passionate man, and his passionate-ness no doubt enters into his love of God. But if it could be shown that the love of God was in St. Augustine or any other of the major saints merely emotion, sublimated or unsublimated, religion would be only the “illusion” that Freud himself has declared it to be. The psycho-analytical divine, who is, I am told, a fairly frequent type in England, is about the worst *mélange des genres* that has appeared even in the present age of confusion.

One may be helped in escaping from this confusion by considering, so far as possible from a strictly psychological point of view, what the exercise of the higher will has actually meant in genuine religion. One must admit at the outset the difficulty of determining what is genuine religion. Religion, not merely today but always, has been subject to extraordinary perversions. It has ever been the chosen domain of self-deception and “wishful” thinking. When one reflects on the fanaticism, casuistry, obscurantism, and hypocrisy that have defaced the history of Christianity itself, one is tempted at times to acquiesce in the famous exclamation of Lucretius. Yet one must insist that religion is in its purity the very height of man. As to where this pure religion is to be found, we should keep in mind the saying of Joubert that in matters religious it is a bad sign when one differs from the

saints. Let us then turn to the saints in whom there is some authentic survival of the spirit of the Founder. This spirit surely appears in the author of the *Imitation* when he writes: "Know for certain that thou must lead a dying life; and the more a man dies to himself the more he begins to live in God." Moreover, the author of the *Imitation* is at one here not only with Christ but with Buddha, the chief source of sanctity in the Far East.

The point on which Christ and Buddha are in accord is in the need of renunciation. It should be abundantly plain from all I have said that the higher will is felt in its relation to the expansive desires as a will to refrain. The humanist does not carry the exercise of this will beyond a subduing of his desires to the law of measure; but it may be carried much further until it amounts to a turning away from the desires of the natural man altogether — the "dying to the world" of the Christian.

With this background in mind, we should know what to think of the humanistic and religious claims of the modernist movement. This movement has, from the eighteenth century and in some respects from the Renaissance, been marked by a growing discredit of the will to refrain. The very word renunciation has been rarely pronounced by those who have entered into the movement. The chief exception that occurs to one is Goethe (echoed at times by Carlyle). Anyone who thinks of the series of Goethe's love affairs prolonged into the seventies, is scarcely likely to maintain that his *Entsagung* was of a very austere character even for the man of the world, not to speak of the saint. The humanitarians in particular, whether of the utilitarian or of the sentimental type, have put slight emphasis on the inner control of appetite. They have encouraged, either directly or through the ineffectiveness of the substitutes they have offered for this control, a multiplication and complication of desires that is in flat contradiction with the wisdom of the ages. Judged by the standards of the great traditional faiths, the religion of "progress" or "service" or "humanity" merely illustrates on a vast scale the truth of the old

Latin adage that "the world wishes to be deceived." The various naturalistic philosophies that have been built up on the ruins of tradition should, at all events, whatever their merits or demerits, be made to stand on their own feet. It should be one's ambition to develop so keen a Socratic dialectic, supported by such a wealth of historical illustration, that it will not be easy for the Walter Lippmanns of the future to propose some form of naturalism as the equivalent of "humanism" and "high religion."

In his attempt to show the inadequacy of humanism apart from dogmatic and revealed religion, Mr. T. S. Eliot has painted a picture of the humanist exercising in a sort of psychic solitude self-control purely for the sake of control. It is evident however that the real humanist consents, like Aristotle, to limit his desires only in so far as this limitation can be shown to make for his own happiness. This primary reference to the individual and his happiness is something with which we are nowadays rather unfamiliar. Our preoccupation, one is almost tempted to say our obsession, is, at least in our official philosophy, with society and its supposed interests. A study of humanism from the sociological point of view would call for a separate essay. I may, however, indicate briefly the main issue: the individual who is practicing humanistic control is really subordinating to the part of himself which he possesses in common with other men, that part of himself which is driving him apart from them. If several individuals submit to the same or a similar humanistic discipline, they will become psychically less separate, will, in short, move toward a communion. A group that is thus getting together on a sound ethical basis will be felt at once as an element of social order and stability.

No doubt a still more perfect communion may be achieved on the religious level. There are however differences of dogma and ecclesiastical discipline that make a meeting on this plane difficult even for the various denominations of Christians. If one's survey is extended, as it should be in these days of universal and facile material communication, to include Mahometans and Hindus and

Chinese, the obstacles in the way of a union among men that is primarily religious are seen to be well-nigh insuperable. It might, for example, be conducive to the peace of the world if everybody, East and West, accepted the authority of the Pope. The chances of such universal acceptance are, however, short of some very "visible upset of grace," practically negligible. One can scarcely remind oneself too often that the great traditional faiths, notably Christianity and Buddhism, have their humanistic side where closer agreement may be possible. If the leaders of the various national and cultural groups could bring themselves to display in their dealings with one another moderation, common sense and common decency, they would accomplish a great deal — vastly more than they have been accomplishing of late. The difficulties in the way of an understanding, even on this humanistic basis, not to speak of any deeper religious understanding, have been augmented by the fact that large numbers in the Christian Occident as well as in the Orient, especially in China, are falling away from their traditional disciplines into spiritual anarchy. The dangers of this anarchy, combined, as it is, with the accumulation of a formidable mass of machinery that, in the abeyance of any higher will, is likely to be pressed into the service of the will to power, are appalling.

The first step, if there is to be an effective opposition to spiritual anarchy of the current type, must be, as I remarked at the outset, right definition. The idea is becoming fairly widespread that there is needed at present a reaction from the romantic movement and that this reaction should assume a religious or a humanistic character. This idea will not in itself take us very far. Even Benedetto Croce, whose philosophy would seem to be in its underlying postulates almost at the opposite pole from a genuinely religious or humanistic position, has declared that we need a "new Christianity" or a "new humanism," if we are to escape "from intellec-

tual anarchy, from unbridled individualism, from sensualism, from scepticism, from pessimism, from every aberration which for a century and a half has been harassing the soul of man and the society of mankind under the name of Romanticism."

Occasional humanists may appear under existing conditions, but if there is to be anything deserving to be called a humanistic movement, it will be necessary that a considerable number of persons get at least within hailing distance of one another as to the definition of the word humanism itself and the nature of the discipline that this definition entails. This preliminary understanding once established, they could then proceed, in the literal sense of that unjustly discredited term, to work out a convention. Their next concern would almost inevitably be with education. Education is, as Professor Gass has remarked, the one altruistic activity of the humanist. The reason is that if the humanistic goal is to be achieved, if the adult is to like and dislike the right things, he must be trained in the appropriate habits almost from infancy. The whole question should be of special interest to Americans. Economic and other conditions are more favorable in this country than elsewhere for the achievement of a truly liberal conception of education with the idea of leisure enshrined at its very centre. In the meanwhile, our educational policies, from the elementary grades to the university, are being controlled by humanitarians. They are busy at this very moment, almost to a man, proclaiming the gospel of service. It will be strange indeed if dissatisfaction with this situation is not felt by a growing minority, if a demand does not arise for at least a few institutions of learning that are humanistic rather than humanitarian in their aims. One is at all events safe in affirming that the battle that is to determine the fate of American civilization will be fought out first of all in the field of education.

## PART EIGHT

### *Recent Perspectives in American Idealism*

---

IDEALISM in the last four decades has shifted from a central to almost a peripheral position so far as the proportional number of academic adherents is concerned. With the passing of Bowne, James, Royce, Howison, Ladd, Creighton, Calkins, and Thilly some have seen the end of the idealist epoch in American thought. In the previous parts of this volume we have noted several movements which were markedly anti-idealistic in polemic: Pragmatism, the New Realism, Critical Realism, and Naturalism. At the present time the newer Logic which includes both symbolic logic and logical Positivism also attacks the logic of idealism.

The twentieth century has been a period of controversy. Obsession with epistemological issues characterizes much of the literature, though metaphysical discussions have not been entirely lacking. In both epistemology and metaphysics an interpenetration of philosophies has taken place so that traditional alignments have tended to break down. Thus on many issues — such as the objectivity of value, the nature of experience and the empirical, the place of analysis, the rôle of teleology, the “quest for certainty,” the nature of the self, the question whether the universe is organic or not — no easy classification of philosophers is possible. There has been a meeting of extremes.

Among present idealists, to whom we now turn our attention, there has also developed an apparent lack of unity. It must be recalled, however, that twenty-five years ago Creighton was insisting on distinguishing two types of idealism. When *Contemporary Idealism in America*, edited by Clifford Barrett, appeared in 1932, a cry went up for a clear definition of idealism. J. B. Pratt asked in the *Journal of Philosophy*: “Will someone tell me what ‘Idealism’ means?” The response to this query led to several interesting and important but until now incomplete discussions and definitions.

E. S. Brightman<sup>\*</sup> pointed out that historically idealism had four main types: the Platonic, the Berkeleian, the Hegelian, and the Lotzean (or Leibnizian). Although interpretations of each of these philosophers are numerous and controversial, certain main propositions may confidently be affirmed: The Platonic type of idealism holds that value is objective. The origin and meaning of value are more than human. The Berkeleian type affirms that reality is mental. There is no non-mental being. The Hegelian em-

<sup>\*</sup> “The Definition of Idealism,” in *Journal of Philosophy*, 30:429-35 (1933). See *A Philosophy of Ideals*, chapter vi, and “Der amerikanische Idealismus seit 1910,” in *Die Tatwelt*, vol. 12, pp. 69-78, June, 1936. The discussion above is dependent on these essays.

phasis is that reality is organic. Wholes have properties which their parts do not have. The organic principle is rational. The Lotzean type holds that reality is personal; only persons or selves are real. On this historical basis any philosophy is idealistic which affirms one or more of these four main propositions. Attention to these types will make clearer the basic unity among the contemporary idealists included below. It will also clarify the relation of idealism to the philosophies which now hold the center of the stage.

From the naturalistic point of view as represented today by Sidney Hook the case for idealism turns about the affirmation of cosmic purpose. Here lies the real continuity, he says, in the idealist tradition. Hook considers this affirmation in substance to entail a choice between naturalism and supernaturalism. The editors have included Hook's criticism in this part of the present volume because of the clarity with which the issue is stated.

The relation of characteristic idealistic doctrines to the chief countermovements in American philosophy throws some light on the contemporary situation. The objectivity of value, cited above, is affirmed in the realism of Whitehead; in the writings of the Neo-Realist, Spaulding; in the naturalism of Wieman; and in the personal realism or naturalism of Pratt. The objectivity of value is denied by most New Realists, by Critical Realists like Santayana and Sellars. In the philosophy of John Dewey the status of the doctrine is somewhat ambiguous. The idealistic doctrine which, since Hegel, emphasizes organic metaphysics, has been the special object of attack by Neo-Realists. On the other hand, Whitehead, Dewey, and Wieman, as well as Sellars, combat atomism and hold essentially organic points of view. The idealistic principle that "to be is to act" or that reality is an evolutionary process is, again, denied by Neo-Realism. But in pragmatism, in evolutionary naturalism, and in Whitehead's realism this doctrine is emphasized.

Still another idealistic emphasis has been on the unity and freedom of the self. Although differing in other important respects, Spaulding, Pratt, Dewey, Whitehead, and many others hold an analogous position on this issue.

Thus we see that while idealism as a school of thought has been on the defensive, many of its historical emphases are recognized by the dominant philosophies to some degree. One historical emphasis, however, is absent from the current non-idealistic schools of thought. That is mentalism. Idealists like Creighton have not regarded this as the touchstone of idealism, and personalists like Brightman do not make it the sole criterion of idealism.

As we turn to specific contemporary idealists we note that the earlier absolutist tradition is best represented, since the death of Miss Mary Calkins, in the philosophy of W. E. Hocking. The personalist tradition is here represented by E. S. Brightman. In J. E. Boodin we note especially how the crosscurrents of many philosophies have shaped and colored his evolutionary cosmic idealism. Though idealism is vigorously defended in many quarters, we have selected these men to illustrate the recent perspectives of that philosophy. Let us turn first to W. E. Hocking

One of the outstanding followers of Josiah Royce, Hocking seeks to establish philosophy of religion on secure empirical grounds. *The Meaning of God in Human Experience* (1912)

remains his most systematic formulation of general metaphysics. This work is a synthesis of absolute idealism and pragmatism, an enlightened and critical mysticism. The idea of God is secured and described in pragmatic terms but entails eventually the concept of the Absolute. Hocking's philosophy is original in structure but reflects influences from most contemporary movements. In his empiricism the category of personality emerges as the deepest, richest, and most comprehensive idea of human thought.

There are three important emphases in Hocking's thought: (1) a conviction that Nature is always present to experience as known by an Other; (2) a defense of the integrity of the self; (3) a strong sympathy with mysticism, though his philosophy has a realistic tone.

God, he argues, is known directly by man in immediate sense experience. We may summarize this argument in five propositions: (1) Sense experience is a common ingredient in the lives of different selves which literally coalesce in Nature. (2) A necessary aspect of our nature experience is the concurrent recognition of Other Mind as also knowing the same content. (3) This Other Mind cannot be that of my human fellows because all these, like myself, are dependent on Nature which does not wait for their knowing in order to exist. (4) Hence we are forced to identify it with God as the universal Knower implicated in all objective knowledge. (5) We know our fellow human beings because we first know God. Here we have the Absolute of Royce's teaching, but Hocking recognizes it also as the object of the mystic experience.

This philosophy is a tantalizing fusion of monistic and realistic viewpoints. Underlying the absolute empiricism of the position are several "axioms" which should be kept in mind.<sup>2</sup> The first is the principle of "ambiguous simplicity," by which is meant that neither the world nor any of its parts is unambiguously complex or simple. Neither atomism nor indefinite complexity is the last word. A second principle is "initial empiricism," which holds that knowing is always "knowing in experience" because the latter is metaphysical. Empiricism means more than going from parts to the whole, for experience presents us with wholes. This principle is important as a criticism of pragmatism. For even if it be true that universals and principles are discovered *in rebus*, in the decisions of particular cases, as pragmatists hold, yet the particulars mean the universal. Thus experience includes *a priori* elements even though they may be the last to be isolated and recognized. A third "axiom" underlying Hocking's view is "inclusive rationality." It states that nothing in experience is mere fact or datum, but that reason has the last inclusive word. This means that ultimately self-existence entails self-consciousness. A fourth "axiom" is "tentative mysticism," which recognizes that in point of time our thought is never adequate to its total object. Stated obversely this is "explorative pluralism," or the doctrine that to the degree which the One eludes definitive characterization, the definable remains plural and open to future experience. The final "axiom" is the "union of fact and value." Fact and value have an inseparable unity in experience; both are objective; both knowing and valuing have *a priori* elements; and both are coextensive. Here mysticism and religion make a contribution to philosophy. \*

One of the special concerns of Hocking, as of most American idealists, is the integrity of the finite self. In "Mind and Near-Mind," included in this volume, the author states

<sup>2</sup> G. Adams and W. P. Montague, editors, *Contemporary American Philosophy*, I:385-400.

his position in contrast to the general drift of scientific psychologies. He holds that a kind of metaphysical psychology is the only satisfactory science of the mind. Mind is the most concrete entity we can ever discover. It is, as creative principle, the primary certitude of experience. On the other hand, a merely causal psychology ("cause" in the natural science sense) is self-defeating. "The mind with which natural science can deal is but a Near-Mind." Hocking goes on to explain why reason should be regarded as a true cause and how in the free action of mind there is, as he says, a genuine addition to being.

Another outstanding representative of current idealism is John Elob Boodin. Boodin's idealism illustrates the "meeting of extremes in contemporary philosophy." His position developed partly in opposition to counter-movements which have left their imprint upon his thought. Early he reacted against Royce. But he was equally critical of pragmatism, though recognizing its contribution. Pragmatism emphasized the function of hypothesis in dealing with the emergencies of experience, whereas intellectualism too exclusively attended to the aesthetic aspect of truth as coherence and simplicity. Truth is never an exact picture of the nature of things. As a human possession it enables man to proceed in the direction of further acquaintance with reality.

Boodin describes the development of his own thought as that of an "inner and mostly unconscious dialectic." Thus, against Royce he defends the reality of time; against the doctrine of emergence as presented in S. Alexander's *Space, Time, and Deity*, he upholds a theory of cosmic interaction, though he does not completely reject "emergence"; and against pragmatism he stresses the structure as well as the function of truth. His own view he calls an "empirical realism and a metaphysical energism, with a functional conception of qualities and values." The term "cosmic idealism" may with equal appropriateness be applied to his cosmology. He has assimilated the content of contemporary science into his philosophy and has given it an interpretation consonant (from his point of view) with other types of human experience and the historic structure of philosophy.

In the selection included here, written for the volume *Contemporary Idealism in America*, Boodin has stated his philosophic faith:

As the electron is part of the harmonics of the physical field, so my mind is part of the harmonics of the spiritual field; and it is the harmonics of the spiritual field which in the last analysis determine the harmonics of the physical field. So far as my willingness and insight make possible, my life is interwoven with the web of the whole under the supreme master genius. If Ulysses could say, "I am a part of all that I have met," I can say, "I am a part of all the struggling, suffering, victorious life of the cosmos. With my beloved teacher, Josiah Royce, I believe that I am a member of a universal spiritual community and that it is my vocation to participate creatively with the eternal Spirit of truth, goodness and beauty, in companionship with all spirits that create in like manner, to spiritualize this temporal world."

One of the most vigorous exponents of idealism today is E. S. Brightman. Of the disciples of Bowne, Brightman is the leading representative of the personalist school. He is also the most independent. His relation to idealism can be briefly stated by noting his divergencies from Bowne's emphases and doctrines. There is in Brightman a greater recognition of the hypothetical character of all philosophical propositions. At



the same time he recognizes more keenly the definitive contributions of Hegel to idealistic logic. Furthermore, he presents a radically empirical conception of the self in which all traces of scholastic soul psychology have disappeared. In his treatment of the self both as a knowing agent and as a valuing agent he places less stress than Bowne did on apriorism and he points out the affinity of hypothesis and faith. Brightman, quite in contrast to Bowne, emphasizes the positive values of scientific method and its implications for metaphysics. Moreover, he rejects the merely phenomenalist view of time which Bowne took over from Kant, and affirms on the contrary the real temporalism in the divine nature. In his ethical theory Brightman develops more fully the formal problems of axiology. At the same time he faces more squarely the dysteleological and the evil in nature and in man. His examination of these facts has led to a daring departure from the usual theistic position in his well-known hypothesis of a finite God. The theory is fully expounded in *The Problem of God* (1930) and *The Finding of God* (1931). Finally, in contrast to Bowne, Brightman carries the personalistic method into social philosophy.

Personalists have opposed Neo-Realism quite fully. They have been congenial to the basic contention in the epistemology of Critical Realism. They have noted with sympathy the organic philosophy of Whitehead. They have been friendly to the voluntarism of pragmatism but have been critical of its ontology. They have seen in naturalism, as ordinarily interpreted, their chief opponent. Constructively, Personalism accepts the fourfold platform of idealism outlined at the beginning of this Introduction.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- HOCKING, W. E., *THE MEANING OF GOD IN HUMAN EXPERIENCE*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1912.
- HOCKING, W. E., *HUMAN NATURE AND ITS REMAKING*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1918; revised edition, 1923.
- HOCKING, W. E., *MAN AND THE STATE*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1926.
- HOCKING, W. E., *THE SELF, ITS BODY AND FREEDOM*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1928.
- HOCKING, W. E., *TYPES OF PHILOSOPHY*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929.
- HOCKING, W. E., "SOME SECOND PRINCIPLES," in G. ADAMS and W. P. MONTAGUE, editors, *CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY*, I: 385-400.
- HOCKING, W. E., "MIND AND NEAR-MIND," in E. S. BRIGHTMAN, editor, *PROCEEDINGS OF THE SIXTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF PHILOSOPHY*, pp. 203-15. New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1927.
- BOODIN, J. E., *TIME AND REALITY*. 1904. Being No. 26 of Psychological Review Monograph Series.
- BOODIN, J. E., *TRUTH AND REALITY*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1911.
- BOODIN, J. E., *A REALISTIC UNIVERSE*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1916; revised edition, 1931.
- BOODIN, J. E., *COSMIC EVOLUTION*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1925.
- BOODIN, J. E., *GOD*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1934.
- BOODIN, J. E., *THREE INTERPRETATIONS OF THE UNIVERSE*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1934.
- BOODIN, J. E., "NATURE AND REASON," in G. ADAMS and W. P. MONTAGUE, editors, *CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY*.
- BOODIN, J. E., *THE SOCIAL MIND*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1940.
- BRIGHTMAN, E. S., *AN INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1925.
- BRIGHTMAN, E. S., *RELIGIOUS VALUES*. New York: The Abingdon Press, 1925.

- BRIGHTMAN, E. S., *A PHILOSOPHY OF IDEALS*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1928.
- BRIGHTMAN, E. S., *THE PROBLEM OF GOD*. New York: The Abingdon Press, 1930.
- BRIGHTMAN, E. S., *THE FINDING OF GOD*. New York: The Abingdon Press, 1931.
- BRIGHTMAN, E. S., *MORAL LAWS*. New York: The Abingdon Press, 1933.
- BRIGHTMAN, E. S., *PERSONALITY AND RELIGION*. New York: The Abingdon Press, 1934.
- BRIGHTMAN, E. S., *A PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION*. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1940.
- BRIGHTMAN, E. S. (editor and contributor), *PROCEEDINGS OF THE SIXTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF PHILOSOPHY*. New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1927.
- ROGERS, A. K., *ENGLISH AND AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY SINCE 1800*, chapter V.
- WIEMAN, H. N., and B. E. MELAND, *AMERICAN PHILOSOPHIES OF RELIGION*. Chicago: Willett, Clark and Company, 1936. Chapters VI, VIII, and XII.

# William Ernest Hocking

(1873- )

AFTER completing undergraduate work at Ames, Iowa, and graduate work at Harvard, Hocking, like many young American philosophers, studied in Germany. He was Harvard fellow at Göttingen, Berlin, and Heidelberg. Besides his deepest obligation to classical German idealism Hocking acknowledges indebtedness to Natorp, Husserl, Paulsen, Dilthey, Rickert, Simmel, and Windelband. His philosophy of religion reflects the impact of James and Royce. From 1904 to 1906 he was instructor in history and philosophy of religion at Andover Theological Seminary. He taught at the University of California from 1906 to 1908. From 1908 to 1914 he was at Yale; since then he has been at Harvard. Hocking has not developed a philosophical system, yet his idealism is discernible in the great range of his writings touching religion, ethics, law, politics, psychology, and social philosophy.

## MIND AND NEAR-MIND<sup>1</sup>

THE system of the sciences can hardly be called complete without a science of the mind. Its place in that system my honored colleagues have clearly pointed out. Yet psychology remains in the scientific community an uncomfortable and difficult neighbor. The highway to its door, from physics, by way of biology, appears an unbroken continuum only to the unwary or the sanguine; while the other path, that from logic, is at present only a set of hopeful office-sketches. My inquiry will address itself to the question whether mind can successfully be made a theme of science, and what the status of such a science among the other sciences may be.

My thesis is that the effort to create a science of the mind is a necessary effort: we cannot give it up, and on the whole it has not been unfruitful. But the extant science or sciences of mind have presented us not the mind itself, but substitutes for mind, — systems of objects which are equivalent to mind only for certain restricted purposes, — Near-minds, we may call them. The true science of mind will supply the lacking continuity among the sciences.

### I

Ever since man became interested in himself — that is to say, ever since he became

<sup>1</sup> From E. S. Brightman (ed.), *Proceedings of the Sixth International Congress of Philosophy*, pp. 203-15. Reprinted with the permission of the American Philosophical Association.

man — there has been a body of lore about human nature. And probably there has been from very early times a body of protest against this lore, first of all in the form of counter-dogmas. Man is by nature good: man is by nature evil; conflicting proverbs of this sort represent less hostile psychologies than reminders that it is easier to tell a half-truth about human nature than the whole truth.

It is as if men had long been dimly aware of a paradox in the case. Self-knowledge must be possible, else there would be no such interest. Yet there is something peculiarly elusive about it, as if whatever you say needs to be corrected.

This paradox comes to full evidence in the modern era. Beginning as it did in a burst of self-consciousness, it was bound to be a psychological era. It was bound to apply to its quest for self-knowledge the methods that had proved successful in other fields. Some Spinoza was bound to set up a physics or geometry of the passions. The experimental method was bound to beget an empirical psycho-physics. And no one, I think, can trace this stretch of history and doubt the success of these efforts: we have learned through them a great deal about human nature.

But this advance has gone on under a rain of protest, derived curiously enough from those very thinkers who gave modern psychology its original impulse. For while Cartesians and empiricists alike believed that there must be a science of the mind on the pattern of the other sciences, they also agreed on the strangely incongruous proposition that mind and matter are profoundly distinct and disparate in nature. How long could this second judgment live in complete harmony with the first?

It was the idealists who chiefly exploited the difficulty, asserting with Berkeley that we can have no ideas of spirits, but only "notions"; or, with Kant and the transcendentalists after him, that the subject of knowledge can never be an object. These were *a priori* objections. It was quite possible for a flourishing psychology to make light of them. If self-knowledge is in some sense impossible, yet here, in some other sense, is

a body of usable and valid self-knowledge; the circumstance that it is "merely empirical" can hardly disqualify it, so long as it is empirically true.

Nevertheless, the haunting conviction persists that there is something radically peculiar about self-knowledge; and that because of this, our scientific psychology fails in some essential, though neither the vitalists nor the other dualists nor Bergson nor the idealists have precisely diagnosed the trouble. This uneasiness shapes itself into a growing protest which an empirical science can less easily ignore; for it is an empirical protest. Psychology professes to give us a true description of human nature, a realistic portrait; and human nature, on the ground of its own self-observation, shows signs of disowning the likeness! (It would be better to speak of likenesses; for psychology is many.) One in particular, the psycho-physical scheme of stimulus and response, after being given a respectful, even deferential viewing, is soberly judged to be a caricature of the human mind. The rejection, in common judgment, is intuitive, but decisive. Let me illustrate.

A Hindu scholar, who was recently pointing out to a group of our students certain differences between Oriental and Western thought, was asked whether the mystical trait in Hindu metaphysics might not be due to the enervating influence of a hot climate. There was a slightly delayed response and a certain added vigor in the reply: "In so far as mysticism is true, it is true in all countries, even in America." What was the meaning of that prompt repudiation of a simple and banal psychological theorem? Why does the innocent suggestion that *your* doctrine may be a function of the climate become outrageous when it is *my* doctrine that is so explained?

We are not studying emotions today: we are studying the logic of the sciences. But emotions have their logic; and our logical inquiries will be promoted, I believe, not delayed, if we give a careful hearing to the judgments upon which such emotional protests depend. In this case, the judgment is a common and a simple judgment.

## II

Most crudely stated, it is that *causes are not reasons, and reasons are not causes*. And since mental process is at least partly rational, no system of causes such as a physical-psychology aims to establish can be equivalent to mind. Two series of events, one of which is purely causal, the other of which has an admixture of reason, can neither be congruent with each other nor parallel with each other. A causal system can at best be but a Near-mind.

No one doubts that causes work on the human organism, and account for much in human behavior. This is palpably the case in our errors, mistakes, stupidities, slips of the tongue, unreasonable fears, and prejudices. It is here that the causal psychology is peculiarly at home: it is here also that the distinction between causes and reasons is most evident. Freud and the behaviorists vie with each other in accounting for the abnormal and foolish aspects of human conduct. If I make an error in calculation, I may properly consult the psychologist; if I reach the right conclusion, the result is no function of vigor or fatigue, of hot or cold climate, of distraction or repressed impulses. That which is no function of variable antecedents cannot be the effect of a cause. There are no causes for going right; there are no reasons for going wrong.

It would perhaps be an exaggeration to define a causal psychology as the science of human fallibility. For, after all, learning by trial and error is learning to go right, and it is partly a causal process. Successful adaptation is to some extent an effect, is it not, of the play of experience on an organism fortunately fitted to learn? Must we insist on the disparity of causes and reasons when they so clearly run in the same grooves, and every reaction may be described, as Charles Peirce suggested, as the embodiment of a syllogism? "Apples are good to eat; this is an apple: ergo...?" But observe that as a caused reaction, the behavior is released by a physical event proceeding from the apple, while as a mental event it is released by a judgment; and the success of the physical effect does not guarantee the truth of the judgment. A

causal success may still be a rational failure. Thus, if a child has not learned to distinguish between a ripe apple and an unripe apple, its response to particular apples may be by good chance wholly prosperous. The subject does not know that he does not know the true criterion of edibility; the knowledge of his ignorance, the distinctive element of reason which would make his behavior experimental rather than mechanically decisive, is lacking. An accidental success is a logical error, and a mechanical adaptation is an accidental success.

But there is more in the intuitive repudiation of causal psychology than this simple distinction between causes and reasons. It means in part this: That, however true a causal law of human behavior may have been at the time of its discovery, the discovery and statement of a causal principle in psychology *has a certain tendency to make itself untrue*. The discovery of a law of physics has no tendency to modify the phenomenon. The discovery of a law of mental sequence immediately changes the conditions of that sequence.

Thus, it is possible that my opinions *are* functions of the climate. But suppose that I discover, or am told, that this is the case. Then either those opinions cease to be my opinions; for I spontaneously try to correct them by introducing a factor of relativity-to-climate. Or else I reflect that the opinion that opinions are a function of climate may be a function of the climate, and I introduce my correction into the alleged law. In either case, the law as stated ceases to be valid.

Or consider the production of "dramatic effects." A successful causal psychology should be able to analyze their conditions and make it possible for playwrights and actors to produce them at will. Hundreds of second-rate writers and actors are today trying to discover and utilize these psychological prescriptions. But as the public senses the effort, the effect fails. One who recognizes the "sob-stuff" is no longer able to sob, however he may wish to do so. Knowing the causal rule invalidates its action.

In many ways today this truth is manifest — in education, diplomacy, industrial man-

agement, politics, commerce, advertising, the cultivation of religion — that a causal psychology defeats itself in its proposed "application," because it falsifies itself in becoming known. The causal management of men must always proceed in secret: that is to say, it must ultimately be given up.

We have been dealing, so far, with common judgments. We have now to ask, what is their logical essence?

It is, I believe, that *the causal order of events becomes abstract as it becomes a part of the mental order*. In a field of like entities, a physical force is not an abstraction. The parallelogram of forces is capable of telling all the truth there is to be known in that context. But when a physical sequence becomes an ingredient of a mental process the calculus of vectors is no longer sufficient to describe the event. It has *become* abstract. It can neither determine nor describe what happens, for the *what* of what happens is fixed by the judging mind. Again, I must illustrate.

When the child is burned by the candle flame, it avoids something thereafter; but what does it avoid? Is it candle flames, or flames in general? Is it approach to the flame, or only grasping the flame, that is avoided? There is no physical answer to these questions. What is avoided depends on what the child's mind has judged to be the essence of the source of harm. Whether the pain-giving property of a seized candle-light implies the pain-giving qualities of a touched lamp-chimney or of a black-hot stove depends on what genus that mind has made of its first enemy. In what happens within that mind, the physical sequence has become an abstraction.

Let us give this principle of becoming-abstract a more schematic statement.

Let us agree that the mind as knower is related in the same way, homogeneously, to all of the objects which at any given moment it contemplates. For the nonce it makes no difference to us what that elusive relation of knowing and being-known may be.

It follows at once that the mind *cannot be*

*exclusively identified with any one member of any series or class of objects which it contemplates as a whole*. And from this, again, it cannot be identified exclusively with the *last member* of any series which it observes.

If it observes a series of events in time, it cannot be exclusively identified with the last of these events, i.e., the present event. It is *with* the entire series. If this series of events is a causal series — let us say, an evolutionary series, debouching in the human self as an end-product, then, the human self which observes that series cannot be simply that end-product. In observing itself as an effect, it has thereupon ceased to be merely that effect. Thus, if I say, I observe that I am what heredity has made me, I lie, in so far as I intend this to be the whole relevant truth. For the thing which is there added to the moulding power of heredity, namely, my observation of that power, — the thing which is absent from the physical sequence as such, — may be precisely the fulcrum of my release. Upon being discovered, the causal series has not lost its character, but it has become abstract.

An important special case of this principle is to be noted when the class of objects observed is a class of *spaces*.

Commonly, when we use the word space in the plural (as when we speak of interstellar spaces) we mean portions of one space. Kant maintained that this is the only legitimate use of the plural; since space itself is infinite and entire, there can be but one total space which absorbs and places all partial spaces. Modern mathematics knows another use for this plural, namely, to indicate various definable types of space, without regard to their actuality. And Minkowski, in his celebrated memoir of 1908, proposed to introduce this plural into physical theory in still another sense — that of the manifold of values which can be assigned to the three parameters of space in describing the given four-dimensional manifold of events.<sup>1</sup>

But there is another sense in which space has a legitimate plural, a sense more radical

<sup>1</sup> The conception of a plurality of spaces has been considered by Professor Whitehead, and also, I am told, by Professor Broad. I regret that I have not as yet had the privilege of seeing these discussions.

than these. In precisely the sense in which space may be regarded as unbounded and total, there may be *more than one space* for the mind's contemplation.

Let me call to mind that any given fragment of space invites us to explore the region beyond it until we have mentally constructed a total space. That total space may be identified as the space of that fragment. Thus, we may speak of the space of a given picture, understanding thereby not the fragment cut out by the framed-vista, but the whole which would be got by continuing all its lines forever. In the same way, we may speak of the space of our bodies and their environment, the space of actual nature. And my point is that the space of a picture or of a dream need not be identical with the space of nature. The test is simple. Between every two positions of a given space there is a line: that is, they are related by distance and direction — it is possible to trace a continuous journey from one to the other. But between the tree-top in the imaginary world of the picture and the floor of the room in which it is hung there is neither distance nor direction: an expanding sphere from the tree-top would never intersect an expanding sphere from any point in the room. Each space is complete, unbounded, unitary: but they are two. And the mind can contemplate both at once without regarding the one as a province within the other.

I do not say that the mind regards both as actual: it may be — though I doubt it — that the privilege of actuality is unique. But the mind can contemplate both at once. And it follows that the mind cannot be exclusively identified with either space, and hence not with the events within it. But since nature is a system of events determining (in our present sense) a single space-time order, the mind cannot be a set of events within nature. The mind with which natural science can deal is but a Near-mind.

### III

There are various other Near-minds afloat in current psychology, some of which, recognizing that reasons are not causes, begin the picture in the realm of reason, and make

psychology continuous not with physics but with logic.

Such a view of mind is that developed in masterly outline by the lamented Bernard Bosanquet. To bring it graphically before us, let us adopt his illustration of the able manager, skilled in fitting the right man to the right place. Bosanquet represents him as describing his own mental process: "The difficulty was so-and-so, and it just occurred to me that X was the very man whose special capacity was needed to deal with it." In this process of "occurring to" the mind, personal effort, as Bosanquet notes, is neither evident nor availing. "We cannot by attention command the connections we desire." The activity which some ascribe to consciousness is resolve into thought, and thought, in turn, is "something which goes its own way, and has its own laws of operation": in a fertile mind, what we discover is that situations develop themselves, and reach out for their own proper completion. What we call mental action is the "self-assertion of an object, nourishing itself out of the psychical material it meets with": it is "reality completing itself in and through the mind." The result is less a personal achievement than an evidence of that "seamless continuity by which the individual passes into the universe."

It is but a step from this description to an analysis of mind which, without ascribing it bodily to any one thinker, we find hints of in various of the neo-realists. For if we hesitate to ascribe mental process to an activity of the mind's own, the process becomes a grouping of contents according to laws of their own realm. These contents thus acquire a certain primacy in the event: it is their assemblage which constitutes the mind. They themselves, both *sensa* and universals, take on an independent existence or subsistence apart from the mind; and now and then appear, in their changeless identity, as ingredients of the actual mental event.

This attempt to assemble the mind, by selection or otherwise, from a world of independent logical or neutral entities must be pronounced an unqualified failure, if only

because the world from which it is assembled is devoid of meaning. Note what this world must contain. It must contain all such eternal essences, and all their possible propositional relations, true and false, significant and insignificant, wise and foolish. All conceivable deductions are there, already executed. It is an eternal reservoir of all potential thought and all potential being. But I fear that the phrase, "all the meanings," is the perfect model of a meaningless phrase. A musician's repertory consists of a finite number of musical works which he can render: add to this repertory all the other possible combinations of notes and you destroy it. You have returned all the statues to the quarry and lost them in the original rock. This logical world of all the meanings is but another term for chaos. It is no reservoir of potential being: it is the barren infinitude of meaningless illation.

There is no world of essences. Thinking must be thought; reasoning must be reasoned. If pure space is nothing, so also is pure reason nothing without the actualizing activity of the thinker. Slight as it is, the step which the realistic analysis takes beyond Bosanquet is a step into the abyss.

But in so far as Bosanquet tends to ascribe this reasoning activity to a universal subject, while the mind with which psychology is concerned remains a relatively inactive participant in the life of Reason, his view of mind shares with the realistic view another defect. It lacks depth. It is to the self what a mural painting is to the solid distance. Conceptions of mind which cannot discover the activity and unity of the finite self might well be characterized as *mural conceptions*, a variety of Near-mind, decorative but lifeless substitutes for the reality.

We must restore to our accounts of mind the boundless depth of selfhood, its vast otherness from this surface-play of content. We need not accept uncritically that mother of modern Near-minds, the subconscious, to remember that it has something to contribute to our sense of the dimensions of the human self.

## IV

But enough of these negations. Let us turn to our conception of what the mind, in contrast to these Near-minds, is.

It has often been said that the mind is an activity of synthesis or grasping-together. It has also been said that the mind is the principle of synthesis of the great oppositions among the categories, such as the one and the many, the limited and the unlimited. These propositions have a certain obvious truth; but the conception has remained infertile, largely because, put in this indiscriminate way, it leaves the mind uncharacterized, a small and unemployable version of the idea of the absolute.

But suppose we consider not synthesis in general, but certain particular and salient syntheses. The mind holds together, for example, past, present, and future; it holds together fact and value; it holds together the actual and the possible. Take these three syntheses by themselves. Every object of physical nature belongs to one side of these pairs, not to both sides: every such object is an actual present fact. The mind, then, differs from every object of nature in being in addition a hold upon the possible, the future, the valuable — or, to put these together, upon possible future value. Its essential activity is to bring possible future value into connection with actual present fact; and my proposition is that it is the *only agency for doing this*. Mind is the only organ for making future possibility actual.

At the outset, this seems somewhat preposterous; for we often speak of possibility in nature. But the possible in nature means either the sort of thing which occasionally comes to pass (as when we say, it is possible that seal may live under the Polar ice) or which it lies in the gamut of natural happening to bring about (as when we conceive it possible that the submerged Atlantis should re-emerge.) The possible is simply a genus of happening not excluded by any known law, whose particularization we do not know enough to foretell. It always has reference either to human action or to human ignorance. In the strict natural order, only one set of events is possible, namely, that which



is going to happen. In brief, *only the necessary is possible*, and the category of the possible has no objective actuality.

Now possibility means something distinct from necessity, and something distinct also from the purely unreal: the possible cannot be nothing — it must have some basis in the actual. It can gain no such status by being referred to a world of eternal essences. Not all the essences are possible in any given world; hence, to be an essence is one thing, to be an actual possibility quite another. There is only one circumstance known to us under which a possible, not a necessity, tends to become actual, and that is when it appears as an object of wish to some mind. When some mind conceives an essence as desirable, it becomes an actual possibility: it not only has a foothold in actuality as an actually conceived element of being, but it has a veritable *nisus* toward being, such as the world of pure essences cannot claim. As a mere universal, nothing is possible. As a promise of value to an actual self, anything may be possible. The veritable possibility of any idea depends upon its being actually *thought of*.

Conversely, we may say that this is the characteristic activity of the mind — conceiving a possibility and bringing it to birth.

A psychology which finds the essence of the mind in desire or aversion toward existent stimuli wholly misses this point. Mind is directed primarily toward the non-existent essence — the thing hoped-for but not seen: and in the desire or aversion toward this conceived essence there is included the rational *judgment of attainableness*, which marks the transition from desire to hope, anxiety, or dread. Hope is the mother of purpose; a given hope may give rise to many purposes. Hence, while the matured self may well be defined (with Royce) as a purpose, the primitive background of self is rather of the nature of hope. Existence, to a self, means a perception of good and evil as possibilities; and a building, out of many partial goods, of a conception of a good which, as related specifically to my capacity for enjoyment, is *my good*. The unity of that good is the objective counterpart of the unity of the self; and the persistence of the self carries with it a persist-

ent hold upon the possibility of that good, as what I am destined to achieve.

In this relation to the possible good we have the locus of that activity which is so elusive to introspection, and at the same time of that quantitative aspect of selfhood which so many modern thinkers, including Hegel, Natorp, and Bergson, feel constrained to disavow.

For the self holds to its vision of possible good with a *variable tenacity or insistence*, which is the essence of its will, that is to say, of its being. The capable manager above referred to may not, in the course of a day, discover more needs nor see more men capable of filling those needs than the incapable manager. But the difference is that the sight of a man in the capable mind falls upon a powerful current of affirmation — "You belong somewhere"; and the sight of a need strikes into a strong current of belief to the effect, "This is to be met." The poorer capacity has the same "interests," but the current of confidence in the achievable good is languid: the essential activity of the self is feeble.

Resource is thus a direct product of the tension of hope. And this tension, which is non-empirical, is the substance of the will or activity of the self, and constitutes what we call the "depth" of selfhood.

Two things are apparent at once in regard to this activity. (1) While it is subject to no empirical measure or laboratory test, it *makes a difference* in the course of events. It decides, for example, whether in the manager's mind the right man shall, in fact, find the right place. Where these world-lines cross, there is an event: and the degree of hope may make the difference between their intersection and their non-intersection. (2) It is the locus of freedom, for it is the self's determination of its own degree of being.

In the free action of mind there is a genuine addition to being. If the world of the possible were that alleged eternal and infinite reservoir of essences, there could be no genuine creation or novelty: action would be limited to marking out certain pre-existent

ideas as candidates for being. But when we see that the genuinely possible is only what is conceived possible, every hitherto unthought-of possibility appears as an absolute creation. The mind adds to the actual by first adding to the possible. In this view of things, art acquires a new importance for the constitution of the future world; — it is one of the major avenues of metaphysical birth.

## v

We have described what the mind is in terms of an activity which we term, for lack of better words, a tension of hope. We have said that this activity eludes scientific measure, because it lies not within the world of nature, but plies between nature and the world of actual possibility. Have we then simply renewed the ancient chasm, and once more denied the continuity of the sciences?

No. We have only said in another way what has often been said in the history of philosophy, that to discover the continuity of the sciences we must proceed from the concrete to the abstract, not from the abstract to the concrete. Abstractions are discontinuous; and a classification of abstractions is simply an ordering of discrete objects. If you stand on the plain and look toward a range of mountains one contour stands sharply separate from the contour behind it: the mountains are named from below. Look down on the range from the air, and you recognize the binding masses at their bases. It is the concrete which contains all the abstractions together with their relating roots.

It is this passage from the concrete to the abstract which Professor Whitehead proposes in his *Science and the Modern World*. Biology, he holds, cannot be considered a chapter in physics; but physics may be regarded as a chapter in a generalized biology. If you establish the categories of your biology, you find that you have already by implication established the categories of your physics; the latter can be deduced from the former.

Now this is in principle precisely what the classical idealists were attempting to do, under the general head of "deduction of the categories." Only, their concrete point of beginning was not life, but mind. And

with this point of beginning, their attempt was to sweep into their net not alone biology and physics, but the logical sciences as well. The principle of their "deduction" was that the positing of mind carries with it the positing of divisible non-mind, of space, time, sense-quale, thing, causality, and the like. Had they been fortunate enough to have before them Professor Whitehead's deduction of physics, they might well have incorporated it into their scheme with gratitude. And they might have commented on his enterprise that because he had begun not with mind, but only with Near-mind, that is, with something less than the most concrete of beings, he was in all consistency obliged to eke out his universe with another Near-mind, in the shape of his world of eternal possibles.

My own impression of these classical deductions, from Kant and Fichte to Royce and Gentile, is that they are not in detail successful, and that for several reasons. They have lacked (with the exception of Royce) that careful precision in the analysis of the scientific categories, which is so eminent a characteristic of Professor Whitehead's work. A logical reduction of categories must precede a satisfactory deduction. Again, they have assumed too readily that the world we live in is, in its main categories, a necessary world. Finding space, for example, a fundamental characteristic of this world of nature, they have tried to show that selfhood requires the space-form of experience. But to me their labors here are lamentably unconvincing: I can see that selfhood requires manifoldness, but not (with Gentile) that manifoldness must necessarily be spatial rather than tonal or otherwise. It is at least conceivable that space is not necessary to selfhood, but arises out of the realm of actual possibility, and, therefore, evades that form of deduction. Finally, they have not reckoned enough with the long labor of understanding the self. True as it is that the abstract must be understood from the concrete, we cannot carry out the deduction until the concrete itself is fully known.

The conclusion is that the deduction of the categories from selfhood is a valid and neces-

sary aim, always premature in its detailed execution. In the work of such a thinker as Hegel, it becomes a kind of technical poetry. It is not to be discarded on that account. On the contrary, this imaginative exuberance which Hegel mistook for dialectic may be an unwitting contribution to another alliance, not less important for philosophy than the alliance with science, namely, that with the poet and the prophet.

Meantime, the thing of primary importance for us is to recognize the inescapable validity of the problem of "deducing the categories." Mind is the most concrete entity we can ever discover, for the discovery of an entity supposedly more concrete would reveal the discoverer as one stage more concrete still. This deduction, furthermore, a

kind of metaphysical psychology, is the only satisfactory science of the mind; and the only science that can cherish the ideal of becoming a perfect science, for it is the only one that can hope to understand its own data. The several Near-minds of the scientific psychologies have their worth and their actuality; but they have life only as organs of mind.

Finally, an admonition for the philosopher. It is not unimportant what any man thinks of mind: it is not unimportant, therefore, what philosophy represents mind to be. We dare not wholly ignore what the mystics have told us. To regard the mind as the creative principle, they say, is not an hypothesis among others in metaphysics, but the primary certitude of experience.

## *John Elof Boodin*

(1869- )

AS AN eighteen-year-old boy Boodin came to America from Sweden in the steerage. His first contacts with American life were in a mining town in Illinois. Later he attended the University of Colorado, the University of Minnesota, and Brown University. At Brown under James Seth he began his study of Kant and Hegel. In 1897 he entered Harvard — the Harvard of James, Royce, Everett, Palmer, Münsterberg, and Santayana — the same Harvard which Hocking and Perry attended. Of these Boodin came especially under the influence of Royce; yet it was in opposition to his absolute idealism that Boodin developed a theory of real non-serial time. His cosmic idealism developed by a process of an "inner and mostly unconscious dialectic," to use his own phrase. Boodin taught at Grinnell from 1900 to 1904, at the University of Kansas from 1904 to 1913, at Carleton from 1913 to 1928. Since then he has been at the University of California at Los Angeles.

### GOD AND COSMIC STRUCTURE<sup>1</sup>

It is a momentous venture to attempt to frame an hypothesis of the universe. But if we reflect upon the meaning of life, we are forced to make such an effort. The only way we can escape the responsibility is to be guilty of the great refusal — the refusal to think. If we frame an hypothesis, it should be such as to assign the proper significance to all the facts of human experience — not merely the physical facts but the biological and mental as well; not merely our scientific interests, but our aesthetic, ethical, and religious interests as well. And it should do so in the simplest possible way. It would be futile

and impossible to examine all possible solutions. Henri Poincaré proved long ago that if there is one explanation of a class of phenomena, there are an infinite number of explanations. We must follow the example of science and work out from the significant efforts in the past. We must try to discover the hypothesis which is most probable. In general we may say that the theories of the universe fall under two fundamental types. One type starts with the assumption that the world is a shifting heap of elements, which arrange themselves by external relations. This type of theory denies any guiding whole,

<sup>1</sup> From C. Barrett (ed.), *Contemporary Idealism in America*, pp. 199-216. Reprinted with the permission of The Macmillan Company.

whether in the small or in the large. The opposite type of theory presupposes that the events in the universe are guided by form or pattern. In a broad sense it assumes that the universe is in some sense organic, i.e., that the activities of the parts have reference to one another and to the whole in such a way as to supplement one another and to promote the continuity and harmony of the whole, though the indeterminacy and inertia of the parts limit the realization of such harmony in our world of change.

We may assume the doctrine of evolution "in the broader sense of the continuity of the physical universe throughout all time, and the orderliness of the processes of change which go on unceasingly. Every physical unit which we recognize in nature — electrons, atoms, crystals, cells, stars, galaxies — has at some time come into existence and at some time in the future will pass out of existence; and furthermore the manner of their coming and going is quite orderly, and, within certain limits, is even predictable."<sup>2</sup> But we must keep in mind that nature is not just one evolution "from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous with the corresponding dissipation of motion," as Herbert Spencer conceived it and as it has been the custom to conceive it. Even S. Alexander, in his *Space, Time and Deity*, thinks of evolution as one process where everything, including Deity, emerges from an original matrix of Space-Time. Alexander's Deity is earth-born. To conceive of evolution as one history is to think of it as a finite drama, where the curtain is rung up on an original distribution of elements — however they be conceived — and is rung down with the dissipation of the available energy. This leaves the beginning and the end in the dark. Evolution as science conceives it, on the basis of the available facts, is multiple. There are an indefinite number of cosmic histories at various stages of integration. In some way these histories must sustain a give-and-take relation to one another, so that the available energy is kept constant. Running up and running down, expansion and contraction, are relative, depending upon the frame of reference. For

we do not conceive of the cosmos as running down, though we know that individual parts run down. The cosmos must be conceived, not merely as a dynamic equilibrium, but as a living dynamic equilibrium of such structure or "curvature" that the loss of available energy in one part is compensated for by an equal increase elsewhere, for only a living equilibrium can be self-sustaining. This conception of equilibrium must apply to the organization of energy as well as its intensity. Energy apart from organization is an abstraction. There is not *one* evolution, but an indefinite number of local evolutions, with compensations amongst them. This is implied in our conception of the universe as a going concern.

The real question then is not, What does evolution in general mean? The cosmos as a whole does not evolve. The question is rather, What does local evolution mean? And the local evolution of which we are a part, *viz.*, the evolution of our earth, has naturally a special interest for us. The theory of "strict emergence" holds that new forms, characteristics, events, arise from a state of affairs in which these novelties did not exist; and this happens without any guidance whatsoever, immanent or transcendent. According to the probability of chance, if you shuffle certain elements, any combination can occur in infinite time. To be sure, science does not allow infinite time for the cycles which it studies. On the contrary, evolution in any one cycle, including an astronomical cycle, takes place in a finite and calculable time. But the emergentist points to the fact that the configurations in question, with their novel characteristics, have occurred. On our earth such configurations as possess the characteristics of life and mind do exist. All we need to do is to examine what sort of configurations give rise to such properties as life and mind. In this respect emergence is merely descriptive.

The theory of emergence need not commit itself to any special conception of world stuff. It may, like W. K. Clifford, start with mind-stuff. It may assume with Haeckel that the simplest matter is endowed with soul. But

<sup>2</sup> Professor W. D. MacMillan, *A Debate on Relativity* (Open Court, 1927), p. 118.

the emergence theory now in vogue calls itself "materialistic emergence," which means that everything emerges from "configurations of matter." This theory owes its precision to the fact that it assumes the nineteenth-century conception of matter and mechanism. Just now it would not be so easy to say what is meant by matter and configurations of matter. It is certain at any rate that the billiard-ball model of the seventeenth century is no longer applicable. Professor R. D. Carmichael has well summed up the present plight of mechanical materialism: "It is absurd to speak of a mechanical explanation of life and thought when we have found ourselves in such difficulties that we no longer know what we should mean by a mechanical explanation of phenomena not involving life."<sup>1</sup> But, as Hegel with great sagacity observed, when philosophers arrive on the scene, the owl of Minerva has taken its flight.

We may say that "materialistic emergence" owes its plausibility to the fact that it is built on an antiquated science. The conception of the world which is implied in the science of today gives the lie to the idea that the world as it is can be accounted for on the probability of chance. On the contrary, it makes necessary the conception of *cosmic control* or *cosmic structure*. The quantum of radiant energy is universally measured. The electron carries a constant charge throughout the cosmos. The shifting of an electron from one energy level to another is constant for the various elements. Hence the identity of the spectra of the various elements wherever observed. The organization of matter is the same everywhere. The atoms have the same patterns and fall into the same natural order everywhere when the conditions permit. The only difference (aside from mass) between our earth and the sun, and between our sun and other stars is a difference in temperature, permitting the organizing process to take place. Matter, moreover, has no privileged character. Matter and the patterns and laws of matter emerge in the various local histories. But there is correspondence amongst emergent histories, and such uni-

versal correspondence cannot be accounted for on the probability of chance. The postulate of the uniformity of nature may be predicated throughout, from nebulae to the most advanced types of organization, such as human intelligence. Any *ad hoc* hypothesis which violates the law of the uniformity of nature must be treated as suspect. But the uniformity of nature is possible only because of a universal cosmic control. Moreover, if the stages of nature which we are able to observe are universal, we are justified in holding that this uniformity of nature holds for evolution at all the stages, though we must allow for variations due to local conditions.

Our information in regard to the structure of nature outside our earth is scanty enough. We have established the law of the uniformity of nature only within the realm of inorganic nature. We have no direct evidence of the appearance of life outside our earth, unless it be on Mars. But the implications of the evidence, which we do possess, are far-reaching. The universality of the structure of matter, within the limits of our scientific observation, shows that the cosmic control which we must postulate operates as mathematical genius in the sense that we can discover number and measure in nature. This means that the laws of logic, whatever they may be, hold for the entire universe. The human intellect is at home in nature. "Even inorganic matter," to quote Trystan Edwards, an artist, "is everywhere subject to the laws of logic which are essentially intellectual." Moreover, the architecture of nature is such as to give aesthetic satisfaction. The principles of aesthetics, whatever they are, may be said to be universal. Cosmic control operates not only as mathematical genius, but as aesthetic genius. A scientific hypothesis, to be acceptable, must satisfy not only the demands of convenience, but our aesthetic demands as well. Art has its claims as well as science and indeed possesses a logic of its own. While the human mind is a local emergence, it finds that its structure is universal, i.e., it applies not only locally but everywhere. This is no accident. The emergence

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 148.

of mind locally may be due to temperature conditions, but its relevance is universal. Hence we must conclude that it owes its character to cosmic genius. We are justified, I think, on the basis of present science in ruling out emergence by accident, i.e., without cosmic guidance, as impossible. The uniformity of the constituents of matter and of the structure of matter could not result on the probability of chance.

If we assume *guidance* in the evolutionary process, we must try to see how this guidance operates. We need not here consider fiat creation, such as has been attributed by theologians to the first chapter of Genesis, since such an hypothesis cannot be regarded by philosophers as a living option. There are two types of hypothesis of interest to us — one is that of preformation and the other that of creation, i.e., emergence under guidance. Strict preformation means that the structure of a process in its actuality, as Aristotle would say, i.e., in its complete stage, must be present somehow in the process from the beginning, in order to guide the development towards the observed outcome. Preformation, like emergence, takes a local view. It fastens its attention on the particular history and holds that the form or structure of the final stage must have been immanent throughout the history. The philosopher who is usually regarded as the author of the hypothesis had in mind exclusively embryology. For Aristotle, species are eternal. Evolution, therefore, means individual genesis or ontogeny. Even here individual characteristics emerge in the process. It is the formative impulse which is present from the beginning. Aristotle is not a strict preformationist even in embryology. Hans Driesch has tried recently to revive the Aristotelian conception by holding that we must assume an entelechy as guiding the genesis of the embryo. Driesch, like Aristotle, limits the hypothesis to embryology. He is no clearer than Aristotle as to how the individual entelechy originates, though of course in some way it has reference to heredity. Preformation as a special scientific hypothesis must be fought out in the

realm of science. We are interested in the emergence of structure. This means the relation of the emergence of structure in the individual to evolution generally, not merely the origin of species and other structural characteristics of life, but the emergence of life from matter and the emergence of matter itself, as we know it.

Is it possible that the whole evolution of life with its branching and radiations and its progressive manifestation of structure is latent in the first life-compounds, and not only in these but also in inorganic matter back to its primitive constituents? The Stoics were the only consistent preformationists in ancient times. The seeds or germinal reasons are supposed to be latent from cycle to cycle, when everything returns to fire. But they do not show how the seeds could be latent. Leibniz in modern times developed a thoroughgoing preformism both in cosmology and embryology. But in cosmology he required a *deus ex machina* to make his theory possible; and in embryology the microscope has refuted the presence of a homunculus or miniature man in the early stages of embryological history. A recent vitalist, Henry Bergson, has, unintentionally I think, offered a suggestion of universal preformation: "Life," he says, "does not proceed by the association and addition of elements, but by dissociation and division."<sup>2</sup> Everything is thus present in the original vital impulse. It is like a rocket shot up in the air which, owing to the resistance of matter, splits up into its manifold inherent impulses, thus giving us the display we see. But matter for Bergson is not real. It is the mere downward trend of life. Reality is fundamentally life and consciousness. Bergson, however, has not seemed to see the implication of his theory of dissociation, or he would have seen its inconsistency with his idea of evolution as creative synthesis. The solution is probably to be found in his pantheism. In a later statement he professes "the idea of a God, creator, and free: the generator at once of matter and of life: whose creative efforts as regards life are continued through the evolution of species and the constitution of hu-

<sup>2</sup> *Creative Evolution*, p. 89.

man personalities."<sup>1</sup> Bergson has not yet shown us how he would account for evolution on this basis. What is the relation of God to the evolutionary process? If God is eternal, what is his relation to evolution? It was easy for Hegel to say that the absolute is present in the beginning, wherever you begin, because reality is fundamentally a system of dialectical implication and hence eternal. But that does not account for evolution.

We may say, I think, that there is not, at present, a theory of strict universal preformation, i.e., a theory attempting to account for real evolution from nebula to man on the basis of a structure latent somehow in the process from the beginning and only waiting to be called forth under specific conditions. Even if we could conceive of such preformation in individual histories we should still have to account for the intersupplementation of such histories into a cosmos. Leibniz, who did conceive of reality as made up of an infinite number of preformed individual histories (every history having its own entelechy or inner principle of development), was obliged to add the hypothesis of a pre-established harmony to account for the correspondence of these histories. God, like a clock-maker, constructed the monads so that they would run in unison. But such an appeal to God to make good our failure in scientific theory is out of fashion now.

The theory which I have advocated is that of creation through interaction, under cosmic control. The analogy of reality to an organic whole is not new. It was advanced by Plato in a mythological fashion in the *Timaeus*, and in a simpler and more dogmatic way in the tenth book of the *Laws*. It was stated by Aristotle in terms of a teleological hierarchy, which is also an astronomical hierarchy, in which God is the supreme and final cause. Aristotle's cosmological scheme was revived in scholasticism and formed the framework of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, but its astronomy has given place to the Copernican theory; and its rigid hierarchy of forms has melted into Darwin's origin of species. It does not meet the demands of the epoch of evolution. In mod-

ern idealism the essential wholeness of reality has indeed been emphasized. But the wholeness contemplated is that of an eternal, inclusive psychological ego. Modern idealism has been afflicted with psychogitis; and in spite of its great contribution to the interpretation of human institutions, it has failed to connect with the main current of modern thought. We cannot banish the galaxies of stars and their space-time relations by retreating within our own subjective world and declaring matter, time, and space to be mere appearances. No day-dreaming can undo the fact that we have emerged in the history of the earth, which in turn is part of the sun, which in turn is a member in one of multitudinous galaxies of stars. If we are to understand the meaning of our existence, we must understand it in terms of the whole of which we are a part. If the cosmos functions somehow as an organic whole, the guiding field must be as wide as the galaxies of stars, and it must explain the interrelation of the multitudinous cosmic histories, in one of which our life figures.

An organic whole requires both a control — a genius of the whole — and interacting parts. We may use the human organism as a type. In the human organism we have a hierarchical organization of levels of control in which the lower levels are subject within limits to a dominant control. Through this control the parts of the organism are regulated so as to serve one another and the whole. This wholeness of the organism is made possible by the interaction of the parts under the guidance of the dominant control. This interaction is effected through two kinds of "messengers" or energy patterns — neural patterns and chemical patterns — which carry determining influences from part to part. That neural currents communicate patterns of behavior to the various parts of the organism has been known for some time. Chemical patterns are carried by the hormones, probably through the blood, to regulate the growth and stimulate the energies of the parts consistently with the life of the whole. But a human being is not merely a physiolog-

<sup>1</sup> Letter from H. Bergson, in the *Nation* (London, January 4, 1913). Quoted by Sir Francis Younghusband in his beautiful book, *Life in the Stars*.



ical organism. It is an organism endowed with mind. Its actions are in part meaningful or purposive, not merely mechanical. This means a whole-control by mind. The development of mind in turn involves a milieu of social relations — the inter-stimulation of individuals by means of language and other signs. The environment of mind is a social organism. Within this there is an overlapping of generations so that the new generation may develop its life under the nurture of older generations. This is admirably provided for in the family. There is also the contact of various cultural groups with their varying advance and varying quality of culture. In human life, therefore, there is a level of spiritual control as well as various levels of organic control. And this spiritual control is made possible by the communication of energy patterns — determinate social influences to which the individual responds. The response, in the case of interaction on any level, depends not merely upon the character of the stimulus which is communicated but also upon the organization and plasticity of the responding individual. The response is a synthesis of the communicated influence and the character of the responding individual. The control in society consists partly of the consolidated structure of custom, but also involves, at a higher level, the evaluation of the social sanctions in the light of reason. The relation of the individual to society is not a closed control, but is open through reason to revision from a broader relation to the genius of universe.

Now let us think of this vast starry world as analogous to a super-organism of some sort, with a dominant control and with the interrelation of parts by means of interaction. We cannot of course carry over the analogy of the organism literally. The universe may function as a whole under a guiding field without being integrated into a single organism. But in some sense the action of the parts must have reference to one another and to the whole in the vast cosmic drama. The interstimulation from part to part, within the cosmic whole, as within the physiological and the social organism, must be by means of energy patterns, carrying determi-

nate influences from part to part. These determining influences have to do with all the levels — material, vital, mental, spiritual. So far as the universe functions as a whole it must be by such intercommunication. Every part must send out characteristic impulses to the other parts in space under the control of the whole; and no influence is really lost, though the motion at the receiving end is determined in part by the state of affairs at that end. Thus while the correspondence between various cosmic histories seems absolute on the level of atoms, the correspondence must become more generic and variant as the degrees of freedom increase. This we find illustrated in the more complex reactions on our earth and especially in human interactions. I am taking for granted that, when energy is communicated from part to part of the cosmos, it is not just energy in general that is communicated — this is meaningless — but that characteristic or patterned energies are somehow communicated. The energies we are able to observe from other parts of the cosmos are specific types of material energy or of radiant energy. These types are communicated as energy patterns. Within the earth-field of communication we know that the communication of energy is always the communication of patterned energy, whether in material or spiritual communication. This I have already shown to be the case in the human organism and in society. So in the cosmos spiritual patterns as well as material patterns contribute to the steering of things in space-time.

We must get over the false notion that unless we are cognitively conscious of the communicated patterns they cannot be real. Neural messengers and chemical messengers do their work whether we know it or not. It is not long that we have known of neural messengers; and it is only within a few years that we have known of the existence of chemical messengers. Within the psychological realm, suggestion may operate all the more effectively when we are not attending to the stimulus. Moreover, since spiritual influences are energies, they must produce effects in the steering of matter even though there is no organization to respond to them

in kind. The patterned impulse of sound has a characteristic effect on matter even though there be no one to understand its meaning. As it is by hearing good music that one becomes musical, so it is by responding to stimuli of a higher level that a lower level eventually becomes tuned to them. As it is through the influence of air waves that the organism is brought to construct an ear, by means of which we may respond by *hearing sound* instead of merely getting its electrical impact, so one part of the cosmos is stimulated to advance by the influence of other parts upon it, though it cannot become conscious of these influences in kind until the proper organization has been perfected for the specific response. And even then we may not be intellectually conscious. For intellectual communication a common medium of signs is necessary.

All this may sound like poetry. But conceptions need not be less true because they are poetical. I challenge anyone to form a conception of the universe as an organic whole in any other manner than I have stated. Cosmic control there is, and it must operate through the interaction of parts. In the part of the world of which we know most, cosmic genius is mediated by the interaction of parts — in chemical synthesis, in the origin of a new individual, in the cultural development of individuals. I believe that this is the way in which development is mediated in the life histories of stars and of galaxies of stars. And here too, as in the earthly relations, the response is due to the character and initiative of the responding agent as well as to the stimulus.

The possibility of distant parts influencing one another has been made clearer to us through the quantum theory. The radiations sent out by means of matter over the ether are communicated as quanta or constant finite pulses of energy. They act as the same quanta over any distance, when there is no interference. The number of quanta depends upon the wave length, or rather constitutes the wave length. Each individual impulse, when it strikes matter elsewhere, exerts its original force. A particular impulse of soul may occur at a distance of a million light

years, and yet exert its energy undiminished when it strikes matter in any stage of organization elsewhere. It has recently been discovered that living tissue sends out radiations and its wave length has been ascertained. This discovery furnishes a new possibility of accounting for the unity of the living organism. But such radiation does not stop with the limits of the living organism. It must be effective through the whole of space, sending its quanta everywhere to act upon matter as the conditions permit. And mind, the highest organization of living energy, must also send out its radiations through the whole of space to effect results in accordance with the readiness of the recipient — steering the energies of nature towards mental organization under the guidance of the genius of the whole. We have no idea of the penetrative character of mental radiations. We do know that the power of a mental impulse in social communication is not affected by the sense medium. If it passes the threshold of sense at all, it effects its characteristic results. Good news or bad news has its characteristic effect, though the sound be weak. We do not know the effect, upon our mood and attitude, of all the spiritual influences which we do not sense. Here lies the real power of the *Weltgeist*. In the curvature of cosmic space no influence is dissipated. The quality as well as the quantity of energy is conserved. This is what the law of conservation of energy means in the last analysis.

What is the nature of the whole-control? May it not be merely the automatic result of interaction? Of late, great emphasis has been placed upon the function of the ductless glands, especially the pituitary and thyroid glands, in regulating the growth, proportions, and tone of the organism. It has been assumed that the secretions of these glands furnish a sufficient explanation. But the growth, proportion, and health of the organism cannot be merely the result of the automatic interstimulation from part to part within the organism. There must be a control by the whole which regulates the production of glands with their secretions and their rôle in the whole. Else how can the

glands know how to grow, what amount of secretion to send out, and where to send it? We know that the control sometimes fails and then we have abnormalities. In the universe there must be a control which determines the size of the quantum of radiant energy, the charge of the electron, the organization of electrons into atoms, of atoms into molecules, of molecules into crystals. The whole cosmic situation with its dominant pattern is a factor, though ordinarily a neglected factor, in every transaction. There must be the genius of the whole in all creative synthesis. In our attempt to comprehend nature, this genius must be conceived as mathematical and aesthetic genius. The history of science shows that the hypotheses which are most effective pragmatically in the prediction and control of nature are also the most beautiful, as Sommerfeld has pointed out. This genius of the whole can be best understood if we regard nature as permeated by creative spirit. For this control of the whole cannot be regarded as a function of matter, since matter owes its organization to this control.

The hypotheses of cosmic control and of compensatory interactions between the parts do not conflict, but on the contrary imply and supplement one another. We cannot account for the constituent elements of nature or their structure without assuming cosmic control, nor can we account for the behavior of nature without assuming a plurality of individuals. On the level of matter, it is the cosmic field which determines the constancy of the electric charge and also prescribes the levels at which an electron can appear. These levels are statable as integral numbers. But we cannot predict absolutely at what level the electron shall appear, though it must appear at one of the levels prescribed by the field. It is clear that there is both determinacy and indeterminacy in nature — a structural field which indicates the permissible routes of transformation and a certain indeterminacy of individual reaction. This duality of determinacy and indeterminacy holds throughout nature. There is a determinate pattern of relations according to which we must live, if we want to live

healthfully and efficiently. But we need not obey this pattern even when we know it. We cannot say that nature is indeterministic microscopically (i.e., on the primary levels of nature) and deterministic macroscopically (i.e., on the complex levels of nature). This misconception has arisen from the fact that macroscopically we deal with nature by the method of statistical averages, as we do in insurance tables. But statistical averages are not norms of nature. They are merely conveniences for dealing with large numbers where we cannot follow the individual transactions.

We may think of the structure of the cosmos as a hierarchy of fields. We are familiar with such a hierarchy in the human organism. There are the fields of the lower centers of the nervous system, there are also the cerebral fields and the psychological fields. The cerebral fields give definiteness and organization to the lower neural fields, as we see in the difference between the precise and quantitative epicritic reactions, when the cerebrum is in control, and the indefinite all-or-none reactions when the cerebrum fails. The cerebrum with its habits in turn is controlled by dominant interests which give direction and purpose to our activity as contrasted with the chaotic reveries when psychological control is weak. In the cosmos we must suppose a far greater range of fields — electromagnetic fields, gravitational fields, chemical fields, organic fields, psychological fields, and, over and above them all, the supreme spiritual field which prescribes the architecture of all the subordinate fields, each with its variant individual factors. The measure and structure which we find in matter is not due to matter alone. Matter by itself would be as chaotic as the old mechanistic theories pictured it. But it is no longer possible to picture the material world as a world of chance. It is a work of genius. We must not, however, make the ridiculous mistake of looking for this genius in the amorphous background of nature, call it ether or what you like. The genius of nature must be sought in the activity which gives measure and organization to nature, not in its raw material. It is somehow akin to the

spiritual activity which we know as creative genius in man but vastly nobler. The beauty of matter and the beauty of art are intimations of its activity, but it is beyond them — ever and everywhere present in activity and essence to create and to heal, but surpassing in quality all that is created.

In trying to picture the control and interrelatedness within the whole in the language of modern science, I have stressed perhaps unduly the analogies borrowed from the physical sciences. If the universe is controlled ultimately by a spiritual field, we must not think of interrelatedness within this field as indiscriminate, mechanical communication from part to part in space and time. We must rather think of the interrelation as mutual adaptation and selection. The target selects the appropriate stimulus, but also the stimulating energies select the appropriate target. They do not hit it by chance. If the cosmos is controlled by a spiritual field, such must be the interrelation even in the field of physical radiation. We know that such is the interrelation on the organic and psychological levels open to our investigation. The interactions within the organism and of the organism with the environment are determined by the unitary life of the organism in its self-maintenance. Energy is not communicated at random but in subservience to the genius of the organism as a whole. In the economy of the organism there is selection of relevant energies. There is suppression of the energies which do not fit into the dominance of the whole, and in this suppression the suppressed energies do not count in the integration unless they are transformed into the control of the whole. Else there would be endless confusion.

Where the control becomes psychological this selection becomes even more obvious. The tendencies which are irrelevant or hostile to the dominant field of interest are suppressed unless they can be sublimated into the dominant pattern. This may be serious for the life of the individual, but it may be necessary for the life of society. If we think of the control of the cosmos as a spiritual field, we must think of this pervasive spiritual control as regulating the intercommuni-

cation for the maintenance and health of the life of the whole. We must suppose that the tendencies which are irrelevant or hostile to the spirit of the whole are inhibited or rather held by the gravitation of their own desire in selfish isolation. They fail to seek integration within the spiritual field of the whole and thus cut themselves off from the life of the whole, to run their own tragic course of defeat and disintegration. Only what tends to upbuilding and health can have a part in the on-going spiritual drama. Whatever there is of goodness, truth, and beauty in finite striving becomes immanent in the spirit of the whole and goes on toward its own development and the development of life within the whole. Here lies the secret of salvation and immortality within the spiritual economy of the whole, where individual willingness is an essential condition, but there must also be the abounding grace of the spirit of the whole. Within the unity of the spirit of the whole, effectiveness is no longer measured by distance in space and time. What is immanent in the spirit of the whole is immanent to all the parts that are in spiritual rapport. All the patterns of energy are immanent somehow in this spiritual field and have their characteristic effect in due season when the conditions are prepared.

God is the spirit of the whole, which, in the words of Clement of Alexandria, "gives spiritual tone to the universe." For moral and religious purposes we need a cosmic Presence which answers our craving for companionship and communion. This the aesthetic conception of Aristotle did not do and, therefore, it must be re-defined to meet the aching need of the human heart. The God we discover as cosmic control, as mathematical and aesthetic genius, is also a God to whom we can pray and whom we can worship. He must be capable of giving love for love and be willing to pity and pardon our failures. No other idea of God will serve. A universe which meets our intellectual demands shall not fail us in meeting our moral and religious demands. We must remember, however, that this organic conception of the universe places a momentous

responsibility upon us for the influences we send out. If no atom can be set in motion without affecting the remotest part of the universe, shall not new impulses in the spiritual field have effect through all time and space? Even now, by sending out noble impulses I may help to save a soul somewhere in the Orion — not to mention someone nearer.

However much the meaning of this life in the whole transcends my imagination, I am certain that in my noblest moments of devotion my soul lives in the spiritual field of the whole and participates in all that is immanent in that field — in the field of life and mind on the earth and in all the life and mind in the cosmos. All that work in the spirit are my comrades and co-workers, however distant they may be in space. As the electron is part of the harmonics of the physical field, so my mind is part of the harmonics of the spiritual field; and it is the harmonics of the spiritual field which in the last analysis determine the harmonics of the physical

field. So far as my willingness and insight make it possible, my life is interwoven with the web of the whole under the supreme master genius. If Tennyson's Ulysses could say, "I am a part of all that I have met," I can say, I am a part of all the struggling, suffering, victorious life of the cosmos. With my beloved teacher, Josiah Royce, I believe that I am a member of a universal spiritual community and that it is my vocation to participate creatively with the eternal Spirit of truth, goodness and beauty, in companionship with all spirits that create in like manner, to spiritualize this temporal world. And I take courage from the faith that however confused and discordant the life of this world may seem, there is ever present, like a Pilgrim Chorus, the eternal harmony of the Spirit of the Whole; and the music of this in my soul — distant and faint though it often seems — is the inspiration to strive to bring more harmony into a chaotic world.

# Edgar Sheffield Brightman

(1884- )

BRIGHTMAN is the successor of Borden Parker Bowne at Boston University. He was born in Holbrook, Massachusetts. He received both the A.B. and A.M. degrees from Brown University, and continuing his studies at Boston University, he received the theological degree in 1910 and the doctorate in 1912. He was a Boston University fellow at Berlin and Marburg. From 1912 to 1915 he was professor of philosophy at Nebraska Wesleyan University, and taught at Wesleyan University from 1915 to 1919. Since then he has been Borden Parker Bowne Professor of Philosophy in Boston University. Among Personalists Brightman is especially emphatic in his quest for a coherent account of experience. Thus he is a systematic thinker, yet he is sensitive to the development of the common philosophical perspectives which transcend the apparent diversity of present day positions. In his criticism of other philosophies the emphasis is on their failure to take all aspects of experience coherently into account. Personality is affirmed to be the key to reality.

## AN EMPIRICAL APPROACH TO GOD<sup>1</sup>

"THEY parted from one another, the old man and Zarathustra, laughing like schoolboys. When Zarathustra was alone, however, he said to his heart: Could it be possible! This old saint in the forest hath not yet heard that *God is dead!*"

The old saint is specifically described as being in the forest and not at a meeting of the Philosophical Association; here he might not see the forest for the trees. But had he attended these august sessions, he might

have gotten wind of the divine demise either from the *argumentum e silentio* or from deprecatory allusions to theologizing philosophers. Rarely, however, would he have found rational consideration of the question whether the God who no longer lives for Zarathustra or for Stalin or for numerous professors, may nevertheless really be alive. Be that as it may, nothing philosophical is foreign to the Philosophical Association, and the problem of God, however it be solved, is

<sup>1</sup> The presidential address to the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association at Cambridge, December 29, 1936. Reprinted from *The Philosophical Review*, 46 (1937), 147-69, with the permission of the editors and the author.

philosophical, even though many academic Americans seemed to Norman Kemp Smith to view it as "no longer worthy even of debate." It may be that those who make God a supreme metaphysical principle are right in everything except in what they regard as the main thing. This is the burden of much criticism. But we can hardly assert that the problem of God is now at last so clearly understood that all competent minds confronting the same facts will arrive at the same conclusions about God. Nor can we find in the variety of opinions about God evidence that the problem of God is a pseudo-problem. The popular device of disposing of embarrassing issues by use of this hissing epithet is more commendable as an escape than as a solution. It is conceivable that the current disrepute of philosophy is due in part to philosophers who decline to philosophize. If a thinker fails to build a metaphysic, whether because of intellectual humility, or fear of compromising intellectual honesty by yielding to desire or social pressure, or a conviction that science renders metaphysics superfluous, or any other prompting, nevertheless, pure though his motives be, such a thinker fails to contribute to the clarification of the central problem of philosophy, namely: What is reality? of which the problem: What is God? is a part.

## I

The problem of God is fundamentally metaphysical. That it is also physical, psychological, anthropological, and historical, renders it no less metaphysical. A metaphysical problem must include within its purview all that the sciences can contribute to it, unless metaphysics is a *priori* incantation without factual basis. But metaphysics is no mere summation of the special sciences, for it deals with the properties of the universe taken as a whole, or of its parts taken in relation to the whole, not with the properties of its parts taken abstractly; and also metaphysics deals, as the special sciences do not, with the problem of evaluation, and hence with perfection. When we speak of God, we are speaking of a supposed being, perfect in some sense, and in

some sense dominant in the universe as a whole. God, if there be a God, is a metaphysical object. What is true about God can neither contradict the special sciences, nor yet be derived from them alone.

The idea of God symbolizes a unity or harmony between existence and value, coherence between the structure and function of persons and the structure and function of things; an end for human and for cosmic endeavor, individual and social; a synthesis of mechanism and purpose. It is essentially metaphysical. No study of the psychology or of the history or of the utility or social function of theistic belief, by Christians or Communists, by pragmatists or humanists, is more than a preface to the vital metaphysical question: Is God real or imaginary?

## II

Statements that God is, or is not, or is such-and-such, are metaphysical, in that they refer to properties of the Universe as a whole. The question then rises in the mind of anyone accustomed to think empirically whether it is possible to verify any metaphysical proposition, and in particular a proposition about God. This problem of verification has been a central theme of modern philosophy from Hume to the logical positivists. It has not yet been satisfactorily solved. Additional reflections may be tentatively offered for consideration.

First of all, there can be no serious doubt that the idea of God is in need of verification. It cannot be taken with supernatural piety as an intuition or immediate experience so self-evident as to compel the assent of every rational mind without further investigation; or if it can be so taken, there is no cogent necessity for doing it, in view of the large number of thinkers who refuse assent to the idea of God. Norman Kemp Smith, it is true, denies that we can reach the divine merely by way of inference; he rests belief in Divine Existence on immediate experience. Yet how can he deny that the very process of identifying the experience as religious requires inference and verification? And how can he deny that the experience needs interpretation? He is right in holding that mere

inference without experience would not prove God, but wrong in implying that mere experience without inference would prove him. Kemp Smith is right in holding that experience of God is necessary to knowledge of God; but, to paraphrase Socrates, an unexamined experience is not worth having. Experience without inference is not verification. The question remains: Is verification of the idea of God possible?

There is more than one kind of verification. Each science has its own concept of verification, which may differ from that used in another science. A mathematician verifies his results by one type of procedure, a physicist by another, an historian by another. Confusion between the kind of verification possible in physiology and that possible in psychology gave rise to extreme behaviorism. It is reasonable to infer that the verification of a metaphysical proposition would in some respects differ from verification in any one of the special sciences. To derive a concept of verification from one field and to clamp it down on all fields is, even when baptized by the sacred name of scientific method, not method, but methodological dogmatism, or methodological chaos. After all, the nature and limits of verification are determined by the nature and limits of the field of investigation. It is therefore to be expected that any conceivable verification of a metaphysical proposition about the whole would differ in some respects from the verification of a scientific proposition about some part of the whole.

Verification of the idea of God, then, would differ from scientific verification. A scientific proposition usually points "ostensively" to a particular public object (although the precise meaning of the term "public" awaits definition) or to a set of such objects; whereas a proposition about God is not primarily concerned with tangible, public "things." God cannot be defined ostensively. The more precisely mathematical the formula of a scientific hypothesis is, the more convincing is its verification; but there is no mathematical formula for God, however true it may be that God geometrizes (and if he does no more than geometrize he is not God).

The sciences abound in crucial experiments; no crucial experiment has yet been devised for the theistic hypothesis. These and other differences in type of verification derive from the principle that metaphysics lays claim to truth about the whole. If truth about the whole is, as some believe, unattainable, then the unlikenesses between scientific and metaphysical verification prove that all metaphysical propositions are unverifiable. But if propositions about the whole are unavoidable, and if they have bearing on propositions about the parts, it is worth while to inquire further into the problem of metaphysical verification. It is thinkable that the disintegration of metaphysical systems may be due less to the inexorable logic of science than to neglect of metaphysics. Let us see what happens if we try the *Gedankenexperiment* that metaphysics is possible.

Whatever the differences between scientific and metaphysical method, science and metaphysics are alike in that each is a search for truth and each presupposes the rational coherence of truth. There are, accordingly, important likenesses between scientific and metaphysical verification. A first likeness is that all verification must begin and end in the data of the present experience of a verifying person. This is equally true of formal and of factual propositions; of formal, because logical reasoning can be verified only in so far as conscious processes of memory, inference, and purpose, continue; and of factual, because the very meaning of fact is what is actually or possibly present in someone's experience. One may doubt what a person's present experience really is — whether it is what Hume's *Treatise* or Kant's *Critique* or Hegel's *Phenomenology* takes it to be; but one may not rightly doubt that all verification begins and ends in a present personal experience.

A second likeness between scientific and metaphysical verification is that each is a type of system. A single immediate experience — if such there be — or a solitary fact verifies nothing. A fact, as an item of present experience, is verificatory only when it stands in relation either to a prior purpose to test some hypothesis or to an insight which



perceives an hypothesis simultaneously with the fact. In either case, all verification is a system of purpose, insight, and fact. Unless verification is synoptically apprehended as such a system, the process of verification cannot go on. If purpose fails, or insight is lacking, or fact is not observed, or the interrelation of these factors is obscured, there can be no true verification. The essence of verification, then, in science as well as in metaphysics, is not merely that facts be observed, but rather that systematic relations of facts be perceived.

A third likeness between scientific and metaphysical verification is that both are hypothetical. No hypothesis about the real world can be completely verified until all experience has been surveyed — a manifest impossibility. One hitherto unobserved fact may upset the neatest hypothesis. Our belief that there is an objective world, and our view of what that world is, both rest on postulates which can never be completely verified, and yet which, like all hypotheses, can be tested by their systematic adequacy in organizing all the data. The metaphysician of today cannot rightly lay claim to a Cartesian or Spinozistic certitude; what he can do is to propose a self-consistent hypothesis about experience as a whole, which is at least partially verified by its systematic coherence with given and remembered experience. He can do it, and he must do it, in some way, unless he is either to be content with avoidable vagueness and incoherence in fundamental thinking or else to pin himself down to the here and now. Since here implies there, and now implies then, the second alternative is strictly impossible. We are all metaphysicians of a sort, some of us without knowing it.

### III

Having outlined some conditions of verification, let us define the hypothesis that is to be tested, namely, that God is. The proposal to define God evokes with new fury the eternal debate about whether definition can come before investigation. To this debate I beg to add the remark that if definition can come only at the end of investigation,

then it can never come, for investigation is never-ending and investigation can never begin without definition of a problem. I should suppose that it would be inane for any thinker about God to assume that thought began with himself. Investigation and definition have preceded us. But it would be also inane to accept the thought of the past without rethinking its problems. For instance, we cannot accept uncritically the Cartesian definition of God as "infinite, eternal, immutable, independent substance — omniscient, omnipotent, and by which I myself and all other things which are (if it is true that other things exist) have been created and produced." Still less can we today rest on Descartes' statement, in reply to Mersenne's objections, "that God is conceived in the same way by everyone, and that all theologians agree on the attributes which they ascribe to him." History shows that the idea of God, like the ideas of matter and of spirit, is undergoing evolution, even though most theologians and some philosophers (including Norman Kemp Smith in 1931) still presuppose the attributes of omnipotence and omniscience.

Granting that the idea of God, like other ideas, is subject to redefinition, criticism, or eventual rejection, we may nevertheless find in the developed religions and philosophies certain elements which are sufficiently constant to be taken as the basis for a tentative definition of God. These elements are: (1) the belief that there is a unified, objective *summum bonum* or supreme value, either as an actual realized being or as a cosmic goal for future realization; (2) the belief that this *summum bonum* is not only final, but efficient, so that in some sense it controls or dominates cosmic process; (3) the belief that the final and efficient aspects are best conceived together by thinking God as a cosmic mind, a rational, purposive experient. Accordingly, God is a supreme cosmic experient, controlling cosmic process, for an end of the highest possible value.

In this definition there occurs the relatively unfamiliar term "experient," which is adopted from James Ward, without implying acceptance of his precise theory. An experient is

any actual complex of awareness felt as a whole. It is a unity within itself by virtue of what has well been called its unique togetherness or its self-identity. Momentary experients are usually unified with previous experients into a larger whole by self-identifying memory-linkages. Thus selves and persons emerge, a self (or whole experient) being any unified whole of momentary experients, and a person being a self capable of experiencing ideal values, i.e., capable of evaluating its valuations. The term experient is intended to designate an indefinite variety of such entities, including the lowest and simplest forms of animal and perhaps of vegetable life, the evanescent experients of certain subconscious processes, the developed experient of experients we call the human self or person, and the supreme experient, God. The hypothesis of experients further posits that experients are in interaction with each other and with non-experiential entities, if such there be.

It is not necessary to complicate our present discussion by raising the issues between and among idealisms and realisms. Whether idealism or realism be true, there are experients interacting with a world. Further, all experients and all entities, as far as we know or imagine, have three properties, which we shall call action, content, and form. In so far as this is a world of interacting process, all of its constituents are active, and in every experient there is the phase of action. In so far as an experient is aware, it must be aware of content — of qualia, essences, subsistents, sensa, or whatever one may please to call the immediate content of consciousness. In so far as an experient conforms to law, or is a member of a rational order, or is aware of the rational relations or of ideal values, there is in it the phase of form. An experient, then, is an actual complex of awareness, including content, form, and activity. It always interacts with other experients and the world, although it is often not aware of this interaction as such, nor of the forms implied by its experience.

If God is the supreme experient, his content would include awareness of all qualities in the universe; his form would include all possible relations; and his activity would

select from among the qualities those of ideal value and would direct the cosmic process toward their realization.

#### • IV

Is there any reason to suppose that God thus defined is real? Despite the plausibility of the ontological argument, God may very well be imaginary even if the definition of the imaginary God imagines him to be real. If there is a perfect being, that perfect being must be real. But we have no right to assert that a perfect being is real merely because, if there were such a being, it would have to be real; much less need we assume that our idea of a perfect being is perfect, requiring a perfect cause. Analysis of definitions is not verification. The traditional arguments are so fully committed to the traditional definition of God that they are hardly more than analysis of it. Whether the ontological argument is taken logically (as by Anselm and Descartes) or taken psychologically and held (as by Lotze) to be a sort of instinct for perfection, in either case it is an *a priori* assumption or faith, which lacks the necessity of pure logic and can be treated only as an hypothesis for verification or refutation in accordance with the facts. The cosmological argument, while more empirical in form, requires only a world, any world, and at its best is quite irrelevant to the essence of God, namely his control of cosmic process to the end of the highest possible value. As has often been observed, the physico-theological (as Kant called it) is the most satisfactory. It is a genuine move in the direction of empirical verification. Its failure to demonstrate the omnipotent God of the ontological argument, instead of being a defect, as has been supposed, may be a revealing insight into the truth that divine value is not unlimited in power, but has to contend against a cosmic drag. Perhaps the telic activity of the divine experient finds dystelic stuff within the very content of divine experience or in the world divinely experienced and acted on. But the argument as stated historically assumed divine omnipotence and rested on selected evidence, and therefore necessarily lacked sufficient verification. There may be

hints or germs of truth in all the ancient proofs, but their strength is not strong enough to prove, as their weakness is not weak enough to refute, the reality of God. A different method is required.

What we need is a genuinely empirical approach to the problem of God; empirical, not in the rigid sense of Hume or the vague sense of Mill, nor yet in the still vaguer sense of much contemporary naturalism (which is as speculative as is idealism), but — to borrow a phrase from the late Mary Whiton Calkins — in the sense of "a truly radical empiricism." Such an empiricism assumes that metaphysical truth about the real rests on the personal experient taken as a whole. Not selected *a priori* principles, not special instincts and metaphysical yearnings, not favored intuitions, are the basis of our judgments about metaphysical reality; not even sense-perceptions taken by themselves. These highly reputed items are all no more than items. As mere items they prove nothing about the real; they are problems, not solutions. Personal experience, apprehended as completely as possible, analyzed as thoroughly as possible, tested as experimentally as possible, and then grasped synoptically as a system or totality — that is the basis and method of metaphysics. That is the process of all verification. That is the empirical approach to God. If truth about God is to be found, it must be through such an empirical approach. For this approach, reason and experience are not two separate powers, but reason is a function of experience and experience is a movement toward rational totality. The artificial separation of reason and experience, like the similar separation of theory and practice, has wrought much confusion.

The human experient finds himself at birth with plenty of confused data, but no tools of analysis, no methods of experiment, no scientific, philosophical, or religious categories. He is a welter of experience. He has no conception of himself or of a world, although soon enough certain insistent and dependable experiences lead to reliance on external sources of nourishment and relief. A few years go by, and he has become so sure of the objective world that he is impatient

of any attempt to discover how he came to be so sure of it. Even if he is a philosopher, his mind may be so littered with *a priori* certainties that he can no longer tolerate the question, Why? Solipsism is absurd, but the thinker may profitably inquire why it is absurd.

The experient who seeks to learn why his experience is not all that there is, has already found reason and hypothesis within experience. "Why?" means, "What is the reason?" His belief that his experience is not all is the hypothesis. In appealing to reason, he is appealing to principles of logical coherence found within his experience, and has acknowledged their normative sway. If he thus appeals to reason, he is thereby freed from the bondage of the egocentric predicament, yet without in the least impugning the reality or diminishing the importance of the ego, namely, the experient, and without denying its limits. What has freed him is an hypothesis of reason; for only on the hypothesis that there are objective causes for the coming and going of some of his experiences can he give any reasonable account of them. He must either reject reason or affirm a world. But every particular affirmation about the world is hypothetical and open to further inquiry. It is popular in current philosophy to assume epistemological monism and to secure certainty through veridical perception in which idea and object are identical. This is insecure security for readers of Professor A. O. Lovejoy. But even if epistemological monism were true in principle (as it probably is not), in any particular instance of supposed certain and immediate knowledge there would persist the doubt whether this time we were actually in possession of that veridical perception, that immediate experience, which is the true wedlock of idea and object and which alone is to free us from subjectivity. When we are driven from subjectivity, it is not by the compulsion of sheer immediacy. Every intuition is tentative until interpreted. Rational system, as the organization of fact and the court of appeal for all hypotheses, is the basis for assertions about the real objective order. It is by rational system that we are justified in arriving at the conviction that there are other experients and a world.

The thinker who adopts this empirical approach will seek to define his escape from solipsism by imagining and testing a variety of hypothetical rational systems. There is nothing to limit the range of his imagination except the facts of experience and the laws of logic; and neither of these yields a single unambiguous metaphysics. Yet, after the history of thought has produced the known varieties of philosophical theory, it is fair to say that the metaphysical hypothesis which at first glance seems closest to experience is the naturalism which supposes that the spatio-temporal order of processes disclosed by the natural sciences is the only ontological reality. The term naturalism will be taken as referring to this rigid and narrow type. Naturalism has the obvious advantage of ordering our most vivid and obvious experiences, namely, our sense-data.

When we think about the phenomenology of religion — its history, its sociology, its psychology — from the standpoint of one who has moved in his thought from solipsism to naturalism, we incline to adopt the view of Auguste Comte, or of modern religious humanists, and to identify God with the felt aspirations of the human experient, and particularly with the ideal aspects of social or group activities. This point of view is a marked advance over the standpoint of the old cosmological argument, which is *wertfrei*. Naturalistic humanism is empirical and its God is a final cause. But it is hopeless of finding any relation between final and efficient cause other than accident. The humanist finds value to be real and important; but he is unable to believe that value controls existence, except in man; and man is a cosmic accident. Metaphysically, there is no objective value. While the humanist's naturalism is objective, his axiology is subjective. Having escaped from solipsism in his science and philosophy of nature, he remains a solipsist — at least a social solipsist — in his view of God. If his theory of nature is no less objective for being empirical, it seems that subjectivism is not in principle necessary to his empiricism. His view of God, therefore, cannot be regarded as empirical merely because it is subjective. The most radical

empiricist adopts objective hypotheses because these alone give a rational explanation of experience. The same logic which allows the postulation of a natural order impels us to inquire into the postulation of a God. Dogmatic subjectivism is a kind of *ignava ratio*.

Every thinking experient will, in some sense, reach the stage of naturalism. He will accept nature as the space-time order described by the sciences. He will regard that order as extra-experiential in the sense that most of nature is not and never has been or will be present in his own experience or in the experience of all human beings taken together. He will treat that order as non-purposive in the sense that most natural objects do not themselves entertain purposes, and in the sense that purpose (except the purpose to describe) is irrelevant to most scientific description. Finally he will treat that order experimentally as non-unified from the point of view of the autonomy of the sciences. Such a universal naturalism — common to idealists and realists, to naturalists and theists alike — may be called scientific or methodological naturalism. But methodological naturalism is sharply to be distinguished from metaphysical naturalism. The latter takes the incomplete descriptions and heuristic methods of the former to be either final truth about reality or at least the limits of present human knowledge. Hardly any naturalist of today would be so rash as to take them as final truth. Certainly no man of science would do so; and any philosopher, whether naturalist or theist, cuts a sorry figure when he strikes a dogmatic pose. Accordingly, what is usually done by naturalists is to regard naturalistic descriptions and methods as the limits of knowledge.

Naturalism can be regarded as marking the limits of knowledge only if its methods have taken adequate account of all the data of experience. If knowledge consists of rational hypotheses about experience, tested by their adequacy to account for all of experience, naturalism is perhaps not the fullest knowledge we can discover. This statement will be confirmed if we can find types of experience which naturalism has either neglected or else has accepted without sufficient inter-

pretation. Such are (1) the existence of experients, which is, to say the least, not clearly explained by supposing metaphysical reality to be ultimately spatio-temporal; (2) the tendency in nature toward telic processes; (3) the presence of values in experience; and (4) the relations of disvalues to values.

First, then, there is the existence of experients. The metaphysical problem occasioned by this fact is what might in a less sophisticated age have been called rational psychology, or in the recent past the problem of consciousness. But we have become doubtful about consciousness. James Ward wished to drop the term entirely; William James misleadingly asked, "Does Consciousness Exist?" Many who acknowledge it think it unimportant in comparison with the unconscious or subconscious. Others see in it a powerless epiphenomenon of the physiologically real. It is indeed here, but what of it? Is it not, as given, innocent, neutral, neither mental nor physical? Its undeniable presence is brushed aside as a mere predicament. The extreme behaviorists have denied the undeniable.

Why all this flight from consciousness? What is an empirical age doing when it ignores experients? The point is that the age is more naturalistic than it is empirical. It is surer of its metaphysics than of its data. Such an age flees consciousness, because consciousness as experienced fact does not fit readily into the hypothetical framework of metaphysical naturalism. If naturalism is strictly true, there really shouldn't be any consciousness at all. Metaphysical naturalism requires its world to be a spatio-temporal system. Within that system there may be as much variety, evolution, and novelty, as natural piety can find, but nothing may transcend the spatio-temporal. In spite of the sincere efforts of able naturalists to solve the problem, consciousness doesn't seem to be what naturalism requires; for naturalism can have only objects or processes in time and space, while consciousness includes in its experience both more and less than time and space. The *Zeitgeist* is perhaps ready for a reaction in favor of the under dog, the conscious experient from which all hypotheses are derived.

Every conscious experient is aware of himself as a temporal process. But every one is more than temporal; for every one transcends time by the "time span" of the specious present or *durée réelle*, by the experience of memory with recognition, by forward-looking purpose, by awareness of self-identity, and by absorption in some cause, perhaps in God. Every experient is also less than temporal; for every one may subtract from his experienced time by forgetfulness or by sleep. Likewise every conscious experient is aware of spatial relations, but is also aware of experiences which are both more and less than spatial. Less than spatial, for there are moments when the whole awareness of space vanishes or becomes so irrelevant as not to be noticed. More than spatial, because every normal experient is aware of much to which the spatial category does not apply at all, such as logical and many mathematical relations, values, ideals, obligations, and universals, as well as of imaginary and possible spaces quite other than the real space of nature.

No adequate explanation of these more-and-less than spatio-temporal properties of experients is to be found in the properties of a supposed purely spatio-temporal nature, without begging the question. If, for instance, one accepts all these nonspatial and time-transcending properties as properties of spatio-temporal nature, one is commendably empirical, but what has meanwhile happened to naturalism? The term nature is one of the commonest and vaguest in the current philosophical vocabulary, especially in that of philosophy of religion. But when the generous-hearted naturalist adopts for Mother Nature all the children of consciousness, he can no longer mean by nature a strictly spatio-temporal system; he can mean by it only X, the metaphysically real, whatever includes and interprets the temporal and the nontemporal, the spatial and the non-spatial, aspects of being. Naturalism ceases to be a special point of view and becomes identical with the search for truth, synonymous with philosophy. Narrow naturalism gives way to inclusive naturalism. Nature then may remain spatio-temporal, but to the realm of existence may be superadded a realm of es-

sence; or the sturdy old Cartesian or neo-Cartesian dualism may persist, with nature and spirit affirmed side by side, spirit asserting its uniqueness and autonomy so successfully as to obscure the relations of the two autonomous powers, the experients and the spatio-temporal order. The dualist is probably right in asserting interaction; but his rightness about interaction does not dispense with his need either of the pineal gland or else of some more illuminating basis for interaction. Meanwhile naturalism has lost its rigid and narrow meaning.

The existence of experients with their nontemporal and non-spatial properties is a stubborn fact. When that fact is taken fully into account naturalism either loses its old rigidity while its strictly spatio-temporal framework melts into process, or else it has to be content with a division of the spoils and take only half of some dualism. Either alternative is a recognition of the unique properties of experients and so of the reality of processes in the universe which are not exclusively spatio-temporal. Accordingly, recognition of the existence of experients is one step, although a short one, in the empirical approach to theism. If the world of sense-objects is the only world and the whole world, the case against theism is closed. If experience reveals additional data, then theism is empirically possible. The theistic hypothesis is not thereby verified; but it is left standing if experients consist of more than sense-data and reasoning processes.

The second sort of evidence which naturalism has underestimated is the tendency in nature toward telic processes. The empirical evidence here is of three main sorts. Nature (using the term now as designating the metaphysical *X*), in the first place, tends to produce beings having foresight or conscious purpose, such as human experients, the apes studied by Koehler, and numerous other animals. In the second place, nature tends to produce unconscious telic processes in connection with organic life. The attempt to explain "instincts" and other telic processes as due to natural selection and the survival of the fittest is successful, but irrelevant, for it totally ignores an important

metaphysical question, namely: What is the constitution of the real that causes any organisms to be produced that are fit to survive? No adequate rigidly naturalistic answer has been given to this old problem of the arrival of the fit. In the third place, there are empirically observable telic tendencies in inorganic nature — such as the processes which result in the beautiful in rivers, oceans, mountains, and landscapes, and the sublime in the starry heavens above. Wholes are formed which have significant structure and function; for naturalism they are accidental.

What of all these processes? They are the data on which the old physico-theological argument relied; they are familiar facts. But a naturalist like Professor Sidney Hook might admit them all, while denying that they point to any unified cosmic or metaphysical purpose such as theism posits. The choice between the naturalistic hypothesis of accident and the theistic hypothesis of conscious purpose cannot be decided by any crucial experiment. Meanwhile naturalists live as if there were an ideal purpose in life and even a cosmic reason; and theists live as if the spatio-temporal order afforded experimental knowledge. Practice cannot solve the problem. The telic facts are structures of actual experience, crying for interpretation. From the point of view of empirical theory, naturalism is in the position of having to explain away the telic facts, whereas theism is in the position of interpreting them. For naturalism, these facts are metaphysical illusions, irrelevant accidents; for theism, they are signs of a unitary metaphysical reality. The metaphysics of theism is in this respect actually more empirical than that of naturalism; it "saves the appearances" more completely.

The third type of evidence insufficiently considered by naturalism is the presence of values. By values are meant, first of all, desires. Even this elementary experience of value is more difficult for naturalism than is commonly supposed, for desire is a process in an experient and it is a telic process. But values involve at least two facts beyond desires. In the first place, ideal values are not mere desires, but are desires rationally criticized and interpreted. They are normative

evaluations. It is a fact, then, not merely that experients desire but also that they are capable of criticizing and organizing desire in accordance with rational ideals of truth and goodness, beauty and holiness. In the second place, it is a fact that experients who reject solipsism believe that the metaphysical X is the cause and support of these ideal values. This belief reduced to its lowest terms means that nature is the actual basis for the origin and realization of these ideals. Nature is thus interpreted as being, among other things, an originator and supporter of ideal values. The theistic conception of nature as the telic activity of a cosmic experient takes due account of these facts about value. The naturalistic conception of nature as the changing patterns of an atelic spatio-temporal structure takes only belated and incidental account of the value-facts. The naturalist is usually a practical idealist who declines to consider his own idealism as part of the evidence about the kind of universe this is. Many of the debates which have shaken religious faith — especially debates about science and religion — have been irrelevant because they have totally ignored the main question, namely, the question of value, to which Bertrand Russell has partially awakened in his *Religion and Science*. Theism is a more empirical attempt to deal with it than is naturalism.

One particular type of value is especially difficult for naturalism. I mean the mystical. Lutoslawski regards it as the only evidence for God. For those who attain the mystical experience, it utterly transcends all other values. At the same time it is the supreme unity of all values, for it is a direct consciousness of the source of all values. In spite of being the supreme value, it lays no claim to exclusiveness. The greatest mystics have never supposed that the mystical experience could or should always be present or always be sought or that its value was solely the intrinsic one of contemplation. On the contrary, they have seen in it an exaltation and refreshment of the spirit in preparation for the ordinary tasks of life. As in the *Bhagavad-Gita* Krishna tells Arjuna to "cast off this base weakness of heart and arise," even to

the extent of participating in battle, so in the Gospels Jesus leads the disciples from the ecstasy of the Mount of Transfiguration to psycho-therapeutic treatment of an epileptic in the valley. A study of the moral and social fruits of mysticism doubtless reveals many abuses and errors of judgment, but also reveals the creation or the strengthening of desire to participate practically in the lifting of human society to higher levels. Saint Paul and Mohammed, Joan of Arc and Savonarola, George Fox and Henry Thoreau, Gandhi and Kagawa, may all have been guilty of errors in judgment. Nevertheless in them all, as in most normal mystics, the *unio mystica* gives birth to an impulse toward social values so lofty that they may well be part of the cosmic purpose of a God.

Mystical experience is a fact of profound significance in the empirical approach to God. But it is wrong to regard it as a sufficient and sole basis for that approach. Even though the mystic ecstasy be an intrinsic value, the belief that this value is also an immediate perception of a metaphysical truth about God is not sufficiently verified by the ecstasy. Even though the mystical experient is led to practical social conduct, his belief that his conduct is the will of God is not sufficiently verified by the pragmatic consequences. Intrinsic ecstasy and extrinsic consequences are both items demanding consideration, but a truly empirical verification or correction of the metaphysical beliefs which they imply must take into account their relations to other experiences and their place in the whole.

For this reason the attack on mysticism which has been made with great brilliance by Professor J. H. Leuba suffers from the same logical defect as does uncritical trust in the immediate deliverances of the mystical moment, namely, the defect of neglecting relations. Professor Leuba has pointed out that certain drugs produce experiences psychologically indistinguishable from those of mysticism. But that fact can be used to undermine confidence in mysticism only by neglecting relations. If the drug-experience not only produced the ecstasy and the ideal social striving of the mystical experience,



but also served to unify and render coherent and intelligible the functioning of experience as a whole, there would be no good reason to doubt that the drug-experience led to a veridical perception of God. But, until judged by these criteria, the structural similarity of the drug-experience to genuine mysticism is no stronger argument against the mystic's insight into God than the ecstasy of the mystic is for such insight. Both arguments rest on a logical atomism which is inconsistent with a rational radical empiricism because it neglects wider relations.

The fourth set of facts neglected by naturalism consists of the situations of conflict between value and disvalue, or good and evil, which are present throughout experience. These facts give rise to what is commonly called the problem of evil. The usual attitude of naturalism toward these facts and the problem which they occasion is that of practical action combined with metaphysical indifference. In the presence of the conflict between values and facts more or less incompatible with their realization, every rational being who is not a fatalist or a quietist is impelled to action that will increase the values and diminish the disvalues in human experience. This action and its limits furnish the stuff of human history, of literature, of the arts, and of religion. Now, for a naturalist not only the struggles of the idealizing human spirit with circumstance, but also the signs of cosmic purpose and of resistance to purpose, are metaphysically irrelevant. For him, evil is a matter of course, not a metaphysical problem. The naturalist follows the fashion of the day and makes his way evasively around the problem of evil instead of through it. For him, neither good nor evil is metaphysically significant. Good and evil are subjective epiphenomena in man, not signs of cosmic purpose or cosmic struggle. But the human spirit ought not to be satisfied with the way around any real problem. The most naïve believer in gods and devils, spirits, satans, and imps, is more realistic, if less philosophical, than the naturalist who believes that the whole drama of good and evil has no objective import and who discerns no metaphysical problem in

that whole area of experience. It is evasive to say that the problem is artificially created by the belief in a good God. The problem is given in the conflicts of experience.

Theism, it is true, has not historically held to any single solution of the problem of evil; but it has made serious and successful efforts to cope with it, whereas naturalism has passed it by completely as a theoretical problem. One may somewhat arbitrarily classify the chief theistic solutions as being either absolutistic or finitistic. The absolutistic solution is either of the Hegelian type, which views evil as included and transcended in the whole, or of the traditional theistic type, which regards all apparent evil as serving some good end that may be known only to the absolute and omnipotent creator. The finitistic solution may be either palaeo-Christian, ascribing evil to the devil, the prince of the powers of the air, a rival of God; or it may be Platonic (or neo-Cartesian), holding to some eternal matter or nonbeing with which the divine will contends; or else it may be personalistic, conceiving the divine experience as including within his own consciousness both a creative will for value and also an experience of limits, both rational and nonrational in kind. Any of these solutions is intellectually more adequate than the naturalistic refusal to treat the problem seriously. Natural piety which accepts facts without interpreting them becomes rational impiety. It betrays the cause of empiricism.

Theism, as we have seen, takes cognizance of types of fact which narrow naturalism circumambulates or misinterprets. Theism may thus be regarded as an inclusive naturalism. From this it does not follow that theism is necessarily true. There are alternative hypotheses which I am not now considering. In no event can one maintain that theism is susceptible of complete empirical verification, much less of *a priori* demonstration. Descartes' statements, in the Fourth Part of the *Discours* and in the Dedication of the *Méditations*, that the existence of God is at least as certain as any demonstration of geometry are valid only in the innocuous sense that, if you assume the proper postulates, theism is necessarily implied by them. The sooner all



claims of *a priori* necessity for any metaphysics are dropped, the clearer the philosophical air will be.

Theism, taken as an hypothesis about the rational interpretation of experience as a whole, is subject to empirical verification, modification, or eventual rejection, like any other metaphysical hypothesis. That there may be some *a priori* metaphysical truths highly general in nature, I grant. What I have denied is that the belief in an objectively real, value-seeking God is such a truth. What I have asserted is that there is an empirical basis for the hypothesis that such a God is real, and that the basis for theism is empirically ampler and rationally more coherent than that for solipsism or naturalism.

But it is more important for religion to consider what God is than to demonstrate that he is. The question thus arises whether the empirical approach suggests any important change in the traditional idea of God. The traditional view has been of the type that has just been described as absolutistic. God's omnipotence, absoluteness, and infinity have been among his most obvious and fundamental attributes for Saint Thomas, for Descartes, and for many modern philosophers of religion. And there are certain senses in which one must, on rational grounds, view God as infinite if one adopts the hypothesis of God at all. As regards time, God must be of infinite duration, unbegun and unending; as regards goodness, God must be infinite, never failing in devotion to the highest ideals. But is it equally necessary to assume that God is infinite in power? Since Epicurus, theistic thought has been caught in a dilemma between the power and the goodness of God. It has been commonly assumed that if one denies the omnipotence of God, one denies God's very being, or at least his religious significance. One who questions the omnipotence of God is told by one's philosophical barber, "Then he ain't supreme." Can the empirical approach shed light on the historic problem of the power of goodness?

The empirical evidence most directly relevant to the cosmic fate of values, and hence to the power of goodness in objective reality, is to be found in the facts of evolution —

both celestial and terrestrial. Astronomy gives us the former, biology the latter. An impartial contemplation of the data of evolution leaves a dual impression of ineradicable teleology and ineradicable dysteleology. There is ineradicable teleology. The order, mutual adaptation, and progress in evolution, above all the so-called "arrival of the fit," point to a power other than the curve of probability, arriving at relevance, wholeness, and value. To deny this is to appeal to magic. But with the teleology, there is ineradicable dysteleology. The incalculable wastage, the blind alleys, the internecine warfare, the natural plagues and disasters, of the evolutionary process are empirically ineradicable evidence of dysteleology. If the dysteleological facts are disposed of, as many theists would dispose of them, by appeal to human ignorance of the absolute will of the Almighty, then by the same logic the teleological facts have also been disposed of. If we do not know enough to judge that an evil is an evil, then we do not know enough to judge that a good is a good. The logic of theistic absolutism may be thus used as well to support atheism as to support omnipotence. The absolutist does well to remind the empiricist of the limits of human knowledge; but he in turn should be reminded that from our ignorance no concrete metaphysical truth can be inferred, certainly not the proposition that God's in His heaven, all's right with the world. He also should be reminded that metaphysical truth must include the truth of all the appearances. To deny the finality of appearances is not to deny the relevance of any appearances to reality.

Treading now the humbler empirical pathway and leaving the empyrean to the wings of the absolutist, we may discover grounds for the hypothesis of a finite God, shorn of the old attribute of omnipotence. The cosmic energy seems to be a purposive power contending with purposeless materials; in every moment of the evolutionary process there seem to be active purpose, rational law, and irrational content. Considerations such as I have urged against naturalism lead to the hypothesis that this purposive power is a cosmic experient. The active purpose, the

rational law, and the irrational content, which are inherent in every human experient, in the evolutionary process, and in every real process or object, are compatible with the hypothesis that the cosmic process is the development of a cosmic experient. This hypothesis interprets the cosmic drama of good and evil. The traditional view of God, therefore, was right in so far as it implied that the will of God confronts eternal *vérités de raison*. But the will or active and purposive principle of the cosmos also confronts *vérités de fait*. Let us call whatever is not an act or product of the will of God by the name of The Given. God is finite, I hold, not in the sense that The Given is ultimately external to him, as a devil or Platonic matter, but in the sense that his will is limited by formal and factual conditions eternally given within his experience, conditions which that will did not produce. Such a God is empirically revealed in the evolutionary process. An omnipotent and absolutely infinite God could be revealed only to an *a priori* faith. Norman Kemp Smith's reliance on Hume's Philo for proof that a limited God can meet the needs neither of religion nor of theology, errs not only by regarding supposed religious need as a criterion of truth, but also by exploring insufficiently the hypothesis of a finite God and its religious value.

The concept of a finite God has appeared in various forms in the history of thought, more frequently of late. The tendency of contemporary philosophy of religion is to adopt a dualistic or pluralistic view of what I have called The Given, rather than seeing it as internal to the very structure of the cosmic experient. This is a gain in religious dignity, but a loss in empirical coherence. It is due to an attempt to retain for God the telic facts, while casting the dystelic facts into outer darkness. A more coherent view will either eliminate God entirely or will recognize the fact of complex structure and struggle within God. But when God is eliminated he soon reappears in some other form, Superman or Proletariat. Empirical thinkers may well find a finite God to be the most comprehensive hypothesis for the interpretation of all the facts.

If God be inferred from our observations of the physical order, the psychological order, and the ideal order, then God must be such as to unify and explain the data of these three orders. Existence, consciousness, and subsistence, inextricably related in reality, fall apart in some great philosophical systems into separate universes. What man has put asunder, say the system-makers, let not God join together. But God has joined them together in every experient as content, action, and form. The hypothesis that God too is an experient, whose action is limited by the content and by the possibilities of subsistence which he finds within himself as experient, accounts for the structure of our own experience, which in the end is the sole touchstone of truth.

The majority of my hearers doubtless think that it is too bold to allow the empirical approach to be guided by the hypothesis of God. Perhaps, then, someone will explain just where boldness should end. Is it humble to accept naturalism, bold to accept God? Is an hypothesis which minimizes part of the facts less bold than one which is more inclusive? Is it humble to ascribe the origin of value to man or to matter, bold to ascribe it to God? It were indeed bold to assert that the theism proposed in this address is the only possible metaphysic. But only he who is bold enough to venture hypotheses which carry him beyond selected facts to all the facts, and beyond all brute facts as experienced to their interpretation and use, is likely to move in the direction of the truth which all philosophy seeks. One may purchase certainty by omitting perplexing facts; but a certainty purchased at the expense of fact may gain knowledge and lose sight of the goal of truth. Again, a humility which restricts its utterances to the results of scientific investigation may gain exactness while losing comprehensiveness and openness to reality. Science does not raise the problem of value or the problem of God. If philosophy does not raise these problems and attempt to solve them, it might well be humble enough to give up the ghost entirely and leave the field to science. Faint heart never won fair Lady Truth.

# Sidney Hook

(1902- )

SIDNEY HOOK is professor of philosophy at Washington Square College, New York University. He is an aggressive proponent of current pragmatic and naturalistic thought. His philosophy reflects a thorough study of Peirce, Dewey, and of Marxist literature. He has done much to interpret Marx's thought in terms of American philosophy and society. Hook's constructive social philosophy fuses the reconcilable elements of pragmatism and socialism. In his criticism of Idealism he employs Feuerbach's distinction of the "natural" and the "supernatural" and finds it necessary to substitute the category of probability for the idealistic category of teleology. Hook's criticism of idealism is an especially acute statement of one of the fundamental issues of contemporary philosophy. The following essay, when compared with Perry's analysis of idealism in Part Five, indicates the shift in naturalistic criticism since 1910.

## WHAT IS MATERIALISM?<sup>1</sup>

RECENT developments in philosophy have suggested that the unanimity and progress long sought for by philosophers may be attained by applying a new method — the operational method of neo-positivism — to allegedly philosophical propositions and problems. This method solves most of the traditional problems of philosophy by discovering reasons why it is irrelevant, or logically meaningless, to ask them. Although I am convinced that this is a fruitful method of solving questions, — at least fruitful for the community if not for the philosopher, — I cannot believe that there is much enlighten-

ment to be gained by such a method unless it is supplemented by an attempt to show why philosophers and others have persisted and still persist in raising these problems. It may be quite true that, *viewed from certain assumptions*, some of the traditional problems cannot be meaningfully stated. But it is positively fantastic to assume that in philosophy, or in any other field of culture, great potholes and commotion are made merely about words. If philosophical issues are declared to be false and artificial, then it is likely that some other issues associated with philosophical issues or cloaked in philosophical sym-

<sup>1</sup> Read, with some minor changes, at the meeting of the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association, Amherst College, December, 1933. Printed in *Journal of Philosophy*, 31:235-42 (1934). By permission of the author and the editors of *Journal of Philosophy*.

bols must have been the *actual* issues in dispute.

From this point of view I wish to consider the issue between materialism and idealism. Two tendencies in modern thought have contributed to making focal the question of what it is which distinguished one philosophical view from the other. On the one hand, the "etherealization" of matter which began in the nineteenth century and dissolved the substantialities of common day experience into complexes of electrical charges and the consequent abandonment of the categories of mechanics as universal explanatory principles, gave rise to the curious belief among physicists, fond of philosophy, that materialism had been "hoist with its own petard," i.e., finally refuted by its own method. On the other hand, in philosophy itself lines and issues have been so blurred that many philosophers refuse to define their positions in terms of traditional doctrines and call for the development of a new vocabulary of philosophic classification. Witness, for example, the strenuous contention by contemporary idealists that some of the most illustrious exponents of idealism (Leibniz, Hegel) have been realists in their theory of knowledge, and the merry hunt which this has set up for *the* proposition which is the *sine qua non* of the idealist faith. The upshot of the discussion has revealed what should have been clear to anyone who has read the history of philosophy without epistemological spectacles, viz., that for most idealists, idealism is not a theory of knowledge but a theory of reality. The proper philosophical opposite of idealism, then, is not realism but materialism. (A more inclusive term which prevents the easy and customary identification of the general position of materialism with any specific historical expression of it, is its naturalism.)

It is one thing to recognize this, but, as philosophical discussion of the recent past has shown, it is quite another thing to isolate the precise point at issue between idealism and materialism in a way which will express the systematic differences between them and at the same time do justice to the great historic alignments in philosophy with which they are associated. The simple aim of this

paper is to formulate the significant issue, not to settle it. In order to win the right to make such a formulation, it must be first shown why the traditional statements of the issue, and the answers thereto, are inadequate.

(1) The commonest characterization of materialism, one which prefaces most refutations of the doctrine, attributes to it as a cardinal principle, the assertion that "only matter is real" where "matter" is an historical variable with values ranging from Democritus' "atoms in the void" to Dirac's "positron," and where *real* is an ambiguous term meaning either (a) existence, or (b) importance, or (c) necessary condition.

(a) Now, it seems impossible for anyone, especially for a philosopher, to have seriously meant that "only matter exists," for the simple and sufficient reason that such a proposition is *obvious* nonsense; and even Wittgenstein must distinguish between the ultimate nonsense which is metaphysics and the ordinary and unblest kind. Where existence is further defined and identified with spatio-temporal determination, the assertion that only matter exists becomes clearly tautological; where not, clearly false. No matter what philosophers have *said*, they could not have meant that only material things existed. For the very description of material things involves an inescapable reference to generic qualities and structural relations which cannot be reduced to matter in motion although they may be predicated of it. Secondly, the very consciousness of material things, not to speak of the experience of pain, pleasure, memory, and fancy, which have no direct objective reference, cannot be dismissed from the realm of existence or degraded to the status of appearance without being recognized. And finally, no materialist of this type can communicate meaningful statements about his position without thereby declaring that there is more in the world than his own system has provided for; since whatever a proposition is, it is something which has implications, and implications are not material things.

Nor is the logic of the situation any different where the idealist proclaims that "only Mind is real" where Mind stands for Reason,

Will, Feeling, or Sensation. Here, too, taken literally the proposition represents a violent abuse of terms, for it implies that the conditions of Reason are themselves reasonable, the conditions of Will are endowed with volition, etc. But the proof that the traditional materialist and idealist are not to be taken literally can be found in their own writings, in which the distinctions drawn by science and common sense are taken over and rebaptized by introducing adjectival distinctions in the Mind or Matter presumed to be exclusively existent. And in truth, when we read how Hobbes distinguishes between different kinds of matter — one of which is identical with what we empirically call mind — or how Berkeley, or Schopenhauer, or Hegel divide perception, will, and reason into kinds or classes — some of which are identical with what we empirically distinguish as non-mental — and further, when we observe the ease with which the verifiable discoveries of the materialist can be translated into the language of the idealists and *vice versa* — is the inference not justifiable that if there is an issue in dispute, it is not adequately expressed in the propositions considered above?

(b) Where "real" is admitted to be a category of value — of religion, Hegel says — the monistic declarations of both materialists and idealists are therewith removed from the realm of epistemological or scientific discussion. For if value is an expression which may be equated to importance, then to say "only  $x$  is real" is to admit the unimportance, and therefore the existence of other things, and betray something primarily, even if not exclusively, about the philosopher himself, the structure of his organism, the character of the culture in which he thrives, and the organization of his interests as revealed in his selective activity. If this theory of value is contested, the problem becomes one of analytical ethics.

(c) Where "real" means necessary condition or independent variable, we have an elliptical statement which becomes more complete when we ask "necessary condition for what?" "independent variable in relation to what situation, context, and expected con-

sequence?" In this sense, the statement " $x$  is real" is an assertion that where certain events are expected or certain effects are to be attained  $x$  (which as a meaningful term involves ultimate denotative reference and as an intelligible process involves the possibility of performing certain acts) is the most reliable sign of the event expected or the most reliable way of securing specific effects. The statement, then, that anything is real in a determinate situation expresses an *order of dependence*, a sequential relation or structure between events. This is what matter and reality mean for the scientist.

It is a methodological commonplace that science is interested in discovering the invariant relations between events and not in the ineffable qualities of the events themselves. For the scientist's purposes the so-called inner nature of the terms of his equations is irrelevant. When he has stated how these terms are related, when he has discovered which are the dependent and independent variables in any law expressing uniform connection, he is describing reality (*a* reality, not *the* reality). Now, there is no sure way of distinguishing between those who have proclaimed themselves to be either materialists or idealists on the basis of their attitude to what we have called the scientist's reality. A great many idealists have accepted a thoroughgoing determinism concerning the ways in which things are *related* even when they have seriously maintained that a chunk of matter is a colony of souls or a complex of sensations. And some materialists have been known who have held to the belief that there are chance events in the world — not merely in the sense that there is an alogical aspect of existence in which structural relations are found, but that structural relations cannot always be found everywhere. Determinism, then, is not the issue between materialism and idealism. Nor is nominalism the issue. Although many materialists have simply divided the world, on the one hand, into particular things located in a specific space and time and, on the other, into concrete mental images, thus denying any objective status to relations and laws, there is nothing in the

materialist's scientific procedure which entails this view and a great deal which is incompatible with it. And that it is possible both to deny materialism and affirm nominalism, Berkeley, Mach, and Pearson bear witness. If idealism be defined as the belief in the objectivity of universals, then every form of non-atomistic materialism is in perfect consonance with it.

(2) Another fact of the historic issue between materialism and idealism appears in the form of the question: what is the relation between matter and consciousness?

The primary contention of materialism is that vital and mental phenomena "arise, develop, and cease" with certain observed, or observable, or legitimately inferable changes in physical phenomena. The evidence is gathered by rigorous scientific method in fields ranging from physics to psychology. The idealists profess not to deny the findings of science, but merely the form in which the materialists have generalized them, as in their statement "consciousness is produced only as a result of a determinate organization of a material system." Here the words "produced" and "only" give offense. "Produced" raises all the difficulties involved in the definition of causation; and "only," the difficulties of induction. But whatever the difficulties may be, they are irrelevant to the issue between historic forms of idealism and materialism, for the reason that every positive and consistent system of idealism cannot escape the use of these terms, too. If the production of mind by material changes and *only* by material changes is a mystery, then the production or creation of things by mental activity (whether it be the descent of the soul in the metaphor of Plotinus or the self-alienation of the mind in the jargon of Hegel) is no less mysterious. The argument that the disparity between mind and matter is so great that there is no common determinable under which their specific qualitative differences may intelligibly be subsumed — an argument derived from the old superstition that "only like can affect like" — would make causal explanation of any qualitative change within any one realm, mental or material, impossible, so

that even if the argument were valid, it operates equally against the materialist and idealist.

Sometimes to the challenge of the empirical data accumulated by the scientific materialist, which show the manifold ways in which the mind is dependent upon the organization of the body, the idealists respond that either these bodies themselves can be reduced to states of mind or else the substance of things is not purely material but spiritual. When things have been reduced to states of mind we have merely the familiar transformation of the psycho-physical problem into an epistemological one. When things are regarded as essentially spiritual substances, we get a view which is in all verifiable respects the same as that of hylozoism. On the basis of the maxim that there can be no more in the effect than in the cause, the idealist argues that the values of spirit must in some way be potential in the stuff out of which it develops; on the basis of the same maxim, the materialist argues that the distinctive properties of life must be dormant in matter. The result is that it is possible to find in Diderot and Ernst Haeckel sentences which appear only slightly differently accented in Fechner; sentences of Holbach in Wundt; of de la Matrie in Clifford.

It remains to inquire why, if the issue between traditional materialism and idealism is neither scientifically statable nor solvable, has each party insisted that the essence of things is matter or mind. The answer it seems to me is this. Among the defining properties of mind as we know it in the behavior of highly developed organisms, are purpose and foresight, the capacity to initiate intelligent action in behalf of goals and values. The assertion that mind is a pervasive property of *all* existence means that in some form or other teleological reference to values is to be read back into the structure and function of what is commonly regarded as non-spiritual. Strictly interpreted, then, the behavior of material particles would have a teleological reference in the light of which natural laws could be surveyed as similar in some respects, or necessarily involving human activity in pursuit of ideals. This would render

support to the religious assumption that all the laws of existence — and therefore the laws of nature — serve some purpose, that they are not intelligible in their own terms, but only in relation to an all-encompassing end — explicit or hidden. In a more or less veiled way, this conclusion was actually drawn by all idealists even when the differences between them were as great as those between Berkeley and Leibniz and between both of these and Hegel.

For some philosophers and most ordinary men, to make the hypothesis of universal teleology intelligible, it was necessary to take refuge in some form of theism. Where theism was openly acknowledged, the crucial contention was the belief in the efficacy at some point of disembodied spirit. This was a sophisticated answer to the old theological problem of whether God created the world or whether the world existed from eternity. During the Middle Ages, it will be remembered, materialism meant belief in the eternity of the world and disbelief in the activity of final causes. Where theism was not openly acknowledged and the quest for teleological explanation of specific parts of nature eschewed, idealists were compelled to interpret the universe as an harmonious whole, as a cosmic order which was at the same time a moral order. They attempted to explain why there is a world, what its meaning is, and what its goal. That is why metaphysical idealism and religion tended to become, so to speak, socially identical twins. Their purpose was the same: *to justify* the ways of god, or nature, to man. There is no time to offer detailed historic and contemporary documentation of this, but the evidence seems to me to be overwhelming that the chief difference between materialism and idealism centers around the question of the *validity* of the arguments for theism or cosmic purpose. We need but point to the fact that almost in every age the terms "atheism" and "materialism" have been interchangeable. We need but recall that one of the motives of Berkeley — but assuredly only one of them — in his attack upon Newton and other physicists who had taken a mathematical approach to nature, was, in his own words,

"to restore and sustain faith in the constancy and universality of Divine Agency in the world." Interestingly enough, Hegel, too, in his doctoral dissertation, *de Orbitis Planetarum*, and in his later writings, condemns Newton's physics because in eliminating qualitative considerations, it made all of nature appear dead and lifeless, incapable of acting as a support for an immanent spiritual principle. And as for contemporary idealism, I find a statement in William McDougall which seems to me both typical and revealing. In summarizing the argument for animism, which he identifies with idealism, he says: "animism... permits us to hope and even to believe that the world is even better than it seems, that the bitter injustices men suffer are not wholly irreparable and that their moral efforts are not wholly futile."

I would not be misunderstood as saying that belief in cosmic purpose exhausts the wisdom of these men. My point is merely that this faith represents the continuity of the idealist tradition, and that the denial that this faith is necessary for the understanding and control of nature and human nature is central to the materialist or naturalist position. I add further that the great contributions to philosophy of Berkeley, Leibniz, Hegel, Whitehead, and others seem to me to be obscured by, and not derived from, their idealism.

In this paper I have tried to re-establish, by a somewhat different line of argument, the thesis laid down a hundred years ago by that much-neglected thinker, Ludwig Feuerbach, that the conflict between materialism and idealism — if and when there *is* a conflict — is the conflict between naturalism and supernaturalism. Here is not the place to debate the issue. If, as some idealists hold, the problem is not accessible to discursive analysis, then it falls out of the realm of philosophy. Where discursive analysis is permitted, it seems to me that the two key concepts are teleology and probability. To a naturalist, evidence for purpose, needs, organization, and ends in nature is discovered in the behavior of *specific* things and organisms. No reference to the purpose of the whole is *empirically* relevant to the purposes

he discovers by natural observation and experiment. And *logically*, no inference to the existence of such a purpose is permissible until it is first shown that the cosmos has the same structure of the finite things which are the locus of the purposes already discovered. But since the cosmos is declared to be unlimited in space and time, the naturalist denies both the existence of such a purpose and the rationality of its quest. The concept of probability is crucial to the only argument for the divine existence of God which is still recognized as having force — the argument from design. This argument in every form presupposes the validity of the *a priori* theory of probability, but not conversely. Naturalism, however, accepting the frequency or materialistic theory of probability, denies that any unique event or system or totality can be made the subject of a significant probability judgment.

Where the issues between naturalism and supernaturalism are not resolvable because different criteria of intelligibility are brought to bear upon the argument, I think that further investigation will show that conflicting attitudes, drawn from a nonphilosophical context — social or political or cultural — are involved. It is these conflicting attitudes

which keep the issues alive. This is largely true, but it cannot be the whole truth. At least two things must be added. There is no *necessary* connection between idealism or materialism and the political or social doctrines which may be grafted upon them. Early Christianity was a socially revolutionary force even though its ideology was spiritualistic; the materialism of Hobbes, and in our own day of Santayana, seems perfectly compatible with extreme conservatism. The nuances and emphases in any philosophical position *may* be historically explained by some political or social motivation, but the logic of any philosophical position, although it may exclude *some* social views, never univocally determines any *one* view. Secondly, social and political attitudes and factors do not *exhaust* the motivations out of which concern with issue of materialism and idealism arises. No matter what the character of our society may be, it seems to me that the age-old issue between naturalism and supernaturalism will always be freshly discovered when man scans the sky and searches his heart for an answer to the perennial question: how to interpret a world in which he had no making, and to organize a life which was not the consequence of his choosing.



# INDEX

- Absolute, Edwards on, 10-11; Creighton's criticism of the, 297. *See also* Idealism
- Adams, G., *cit.* 417
- Adams, Henry, *cit.* 193
- Adams, John, 76
- Adjustment, Dewey's conception of, 378
- Agassiz, Elizabeth Cary, *cit.* 193
- Agassiz, Louis, *cit.* 193; 349
- Agnosticism, Howison on, 266-274
- Alcott, Bronson, 111, 113, 218, 262
- Alexander, Samuel, 488
- Allen, Ethan, 4, 65; 67; 68, *cit.* 69; life and thought of, 84, on nature of God, 85-88, on freedom of the will, 88-89, on reason, 89-90, 92-93, on nature of prayer, 90-91; on nature of faith, 91-92
- Animal faith, Santayana's, 428-430
- Anticipation, Dewey on, 379
- Aristotle, 68, 222, 316, 415, 441
- Arminianism, Edwards' attack on, 3; Johnson and, 5; 67
- Art, Dewey on, 403
- Augustine, early American philosophy and, 1, 65, 222
- Babbitt, Irving, life of, 475
- Bakewell, 220
- Baldwin, J. M., *cit.* 6
- Bancroft, George, 217
- Barnard, Henry, 217
- Barrett, Clifford, 219 *n.*, 485, 500 *n.*
- Baxter, 1
- Becker, Carl, 65, *cit.* 69
- Being and value, Dewey on, 402-403
- Being, realms of, Santayana on, 466-472
- Belief, Peirce's definition of, 345; James on, 370-374
- Bellamy, Edward, 419
- Berkeley, George, 2, 4, 5, 42, 68, 222, 311, 313
- Best, M. A., *cit.* 69
- Bible, Unitarian view of, 118-119
- Boodin, John Eloy, 486, thought of, 488; *cit.* 489, life of, 500
- Bosanquet, Bernard, 223
- Bourne, Randolph, *cit.* 318
- Bowne, Borden Parker, *cit.* 224; 278; 485; 510
- Brain, function of, Dewey on, 382
- Brightman, Edgar Sheffield, *cit.* 225; 485-486; thought of, 488-489, *cit.* 489-490; 491 *n.*; life of, 510
- Brokmeyer, Henry, 218
- Brooks, Van Wyck, *cit.* 116
- Buckham, J. W., *cit.* 224; 262 *n.*
- Cabanis, 66
- Cabot, James E., *cit.* 116
- Calkins, Mary W., 220, 485, 486
- Calvinism, theology of, 1-4; 65-66; 76; 82; transcendentalism and, 111; Unitarian view of, 124-125; Santayana on, 180-181, business and, Mead on, 319-321
- Cambridge Platonism, 1-2
- Canby, Henry Seidel, *cit.* 116
- Carlyle, Thomas, 112, 304, 431
- Carpenter, Frederic I., *cit.* 116
- Catholicism, Santayana and, 416
- Causation, Newcomb on, 196-199; Porter on, 200-202; Clarke on, 204-206, McCosh on, 207-209, Bowne on, 281-287; Hocking on, 493-494
- Cell, G. C., *cit.* 6, 225
- Certitude, Peirce's theory of impossibility of, 334-341
- Change, Dewey on, 378
- Channing, William Ellery, 68, 112; *cit.* 116, 130
- Chinard, Gilbert, *cit.* 69
- Clark, 111
- Clark, John Spencer, *cit.* 193
- Clarke, 65
- Classification, Bowne on explanation by, 281
- Clearness of ideas, Peirce on, 341-346
- Cohen, Morris, 218, *cit.* 225, 414, *cit.* 416
- Colden, 42
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, 112, 217
- Collins, 65
- Commager, Henry Steele, *cit.* 116
- Concepts, Johnson on, 46, pragmatism and, 312; James's theory of, 359-365
- Concrete, Woodbridge on, 448
- Concrete universal, Creighton on, 299-303
- Condorcet, 67
- Conduct, Dewey on human nature and, 390-394, Dewey on place of habit in, 395-398; Dewey on social nature of, 396-398
- Conformity, Emerson on, 164-165
- Conscience, Edwards on, 25-26; Johnson on, 47-48
- Consciousness, Edwards on, 12; Johnson on, 45-46; Royce's definition of, 249-251; Peirce on mediate and immediate, 344; James's theory of, 351-353; Dewey on, 381, 403
- Consistency, Emerson on, 165-167
- Continuity, Peirce on, 333-341; Dewey on, 394
- Continuous Copula, Howison on, 273-274
- Cooper, 65
- Creative principle, Hocking on mind as, 495-499
- Creighton, James E., thought of, 223-224; *cit.* 225, life of, 291, 485; 486
- Critical Realism, 412
- Critical Realists, Montague's list of, 426
- Critical Realists' view of knowledge, Sellars' exposition of, 431-440

- Cudworth, 2 *n.*  
 Culverwel, 2 *n.*  
 Cunningham, G. W., *cit.* 225, 234 *n.*  
 Cuvier, 191
- D'Alembert, 66  
 Danton, 67  
 Darwin, Charles, 191, 193  
 Darwin, Erasmus, 66  
 Davidson, Thomas, 218  
 Deism, 2, 4, 65-66  
 Deistical Society of the State of New York, principles of, 82-83  
 Democracy, Whitman on, 173-178  
 Dependence of man on God, Edwards on, 16-24; Johnson on, 48-53  
 Descartes, 411  
 Design, Johnson on, 50-53; Newcomb on, 196-199; Porter on, 199-202; Clarke on, 203-206; McCosh on, 207-209  
 Desire, Edwards on, 37-38  
 Dewey, John, 219; 312; thought of, 315-316; *cit.* 317; Mead on, 319-329; life of, 376; 413; 414; 475; 486  
 Diderot, 66  
 Dilthey, Wilhelm, 491  
 Drake, Durant, 412; *cit.* 416, 417  
 Dwight, S. E., 3 *n.*; *cit.* 7, 9 *n.*  
 Dwight, Timothy, 67
- Ebbinghaus, 162  
 Edwards, Jonathan, thought of, 1-4, life of, 9; 42; 67; 68; 316  
 Egocentric predicament, Creighton on, 296; Perry on, 304-310, 411-412  
 Eliot, Charles W., 210  
 Emerson, Ralph Waldo, life of, 159; on discipline of nature, 141-144; on nature as appearance, 144-148; on mind-body problem, 148-149; on the scholar, 153-162; on conformity, 164-165; on consistency, 165-167; in transcendentalism, 113-115, 111; 112, 113; *cit.* 116; 183-184; 262, 304, 431  
 Empiricism, transcendental, Bowne on, 288-289; pragmatism and, 311-316, Brightman's approach to God and, 510-522  
 Enthusiasm, Babbitt on religion and, 480-481  
 Environment, Dewey on personality and, 397-398  
 Epicurus, 76  
 Epicurus, 66, 76  
 Epistemology, Dewey's criticism of philosophies of, 379-387. *See also* Knowledge  
 Erdmann, 217, 278  
 Eternal, Royce on the, 260-261  
 Ethics, Johnson on, 47-53, Unitarian, 127-129; materialistic, 131-132; transcendentalist, 135-136  
 Everett, Edward, 217, 500  
 Evil, problem of, Johnson on, 53, Fiske on, 213; Brightman on, 520-522  
 Evolution, Agassiz and, 191-192; Asa Gray and, 192; Simon Newcomb and, 192, 195-198, Noah Porter and, 192, 199-202; J. F. Clarke and, 192, 203-206; James McCosh and, 206-209; John Fiske and, 193, 210-219; Royce and, 253-255; Howison on, 262-277; Bowne on, 284-287; Peirce on, 333-341; Boodin on, 501-509  
 Exactitude, Peirce's theory of impossibility of, 334-341  
 Experience, Creighton's view of, 297-300; pragmatism and, 311-316; James's analysis of, 351-353; Dewey on, 376-390, 403; Brightman on, 510-522  
 Experient, Brightman on the, 513-522  
 Explanation, Bowne on, 280-287
- Fact and value, Creighton on relation of, 298  
 Faith, Edwards on nature of, 24; James on, 368-374  
 Fallibilism, Peirce on, 333-341  
 Faust, C. H., 4 *n.*; *cit.* 6  
 Ferguson, 65  
 Fiske, John, 312  
 Fitch, John, 82  
 Follen, K. T. C., 217  
 Foster, F. H., *cit.* 7  
 Francis, 111  
 Franklin, Benjamin, 4; 42; 65; rationalism of, 66; 68; *cit.* 69; life and thought of, 71  
 Freedom, Dewey on, 398-402; of the will, 3, 5, 37-41, 65, 393-394  
 Friends, Society of. *See* Quakers  
 Frothingham, Octavius, *cit.* 116  
 Future, Dewey on the, 379, 396-398
- Garnett, Richard, 113 *n.*  
 Garrison, William Lloyd, 130  
 Garman, 441  
 Gassendi, 66  
 German philosophy, Peirce and, 331-332  
 Gilbert, Katherine, 223 *n.*; *cit.* 225.  
 Goethe, 112  
 God, Edwards on, 2-4, 16-24, 26, Johnson on, 48-53; Woolman on, 57-64, Franklin on, 72-73, Jefferson on, 79-80; Unitarian view of, 119-127; materialism on, 132-133, transcendentalism on, 136-138; Royce on, 260-261; Bowne on, 290, Hocking on, 487; Boodin on, 500-509, Brightman's empirical approach to, 510-522  
 Good, Edwards on, 14, 17, 20-22. *See also* Ethics  
 Government, Thoreau on, 168-172  
 Grace, Edwards on, 18-20  
 Gray, Henry David, *cit.* 116
- Habit, subjective and objective factors in, Dewey on, 395-398  
 Half-Way Covenant, 2  
 Hamilton, Sir William Rowan, 206, 219  
 Hammond, W. A., *cit.* 225  
 Happiness, as ethical goal, Johnson on, 47-53  
 Harlow, V. I., *cit.* 416  
 Haroutunian, J., *cit.* 7  
 Harris, William Torrey, 217-220; 221; *cit.* 224, 226; 227; 262  
 Hartley, 65  
 Hartshorne, Charles, 330 *n.*, 341 *n.*  
 Hedge, F. Henry, 111, 217  
 Hegel, influence of, in American idealism, 217-224, 227, 234, 486, 500  
 Herder, 112  
 Hicks, Granville, *cit.* 116

- Hippo, Bishop of, 1  
Hobbes, Thomas, 3  
Hocking, William Ernest, 220, 222; thought of, 486-488; *cit.* 489; life of, 491; idealistic system of, 491-499  
Hoernlé, R. F. Alfred, 219  
Holmes, Oliver Wendell, 312  
Holt, Edwin B., 412, *cit.* 417  
Hook, Sidney, *cit.* 318; 486; life of, 523  
Hopkins, Lemuel, 67  
Hopkins, Samuel, 117  
Howison, George H., 218; 219, thought of, 220-221; *cit.* 224; 262; 278, 485  
Humanism, Babbitt's exposition of, 475-485  
Humanitarianism, Babbitt on, 477-485  
Human nature, conduct and, Dewey on, 390-394; Hocking's account of history of ideas about, 491-492  
Hume, David, 65, 112, 311  
Husserl, 491  
Hutcheson, 65  
Idea (Ideas), Royce's definition of, 219-220; Santayana on relative value of things and, 453-458  
Idealism, in Edwards, 9-16, in Johnson, 42-53, in transcendentalism, 112-113; in Emerson, 145-152, 158-161, Kant's influence on American, 217-224; Hegel's influence on American, 217-224, in Royce, 219-220, 237-246, Howison's criticism of pantheistic, 274-276; Bowne's criticism of impersonal, 287-290, Creighton on, 291-303; R. B. Perry's criticism of, 304-310, Brightman's four types of, 485-486; Hook's criticism of, 523-528  
Idealism, personal. *See* Personal idealism  
Identity in difference, Creighton on, 303  
Impersonalism, Bowne's criticism of, 278-290  
Inner light, Woolman on, 6  
Intelligence, pragmatic theory of, Dewey's explanation of, 388-390  
Intuition, transcendentalism and, 113  
James, Henry, Jr., 313, 349  
James, Henry, Sr., 217, 349  
James, William, Santayana on, 186-189; 219; 222; 234, 304; 312; 313; thought of, 313-315, *cit.* 317; Mead on, 319-329, life of, 349, 411, 415, on Santayana's *Poetry of Religion*, 472-473; Santayana's reply to, 473-474; 485, 491, 500  
Jefferson, Thomas, 65-66, *cit.* 69, life of, 76  
Jesus, Franklin on, 75, Jefferson on, 76-78; transcendentalism on, 136; Unitarian view of, 122-123, 125-126  
Johnson, Allen, *cit.* 6, 116, 193  
Johnson, Samuel, 2, thought of, 4-5; life of, 42  
Johnson, T. H., 4 n., *cit.* 6  
*Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, 218-220, 227-233  
Kant, Immanuel, 112; 217-224; 222; 234; Royce on, 235-236, Creighton on, 294; 500  
Knowledge, Johnson on intuitive, 47, Royce on, 247-261, Mead on pragmatic theory of, 319-329, Dewey's definition of, 385; Sellars' account of critical realists' view of, 431-440. *See also* Epistemology  
Knudson, Albert C., *cit.* 225  
Koch, G. A., *cit.* 69, 82 n.  
Krutch, Joseph Wood, *cit.* 193  
Ladd, 485  
Lafayette, 67  
Lasson, 262  
Le Conte, 221  
Leibniz, 221, 222  
Lewis, Clarence I., *cit.* 318  
Liberty, Edwards on, 40-41  
Lieber, Francis, 217  
Light, divine, Edwards on, 4, 25-29, inner, Woolman on, 6, sensible, Johnson on, 46-47; intellectual, Johnson on, 46-47, of nature, Edwards on, 35-36  
Locke, John, 2, 3, 4, 112, 311, 312, 313, 412, 441  
Logic, Peirce on clear ideas in, 341-346; Dewey's definition of, 380  
Lotze, R. H., 217, 222, 234, 278  
Lovejoy, Arthur O., 220, 311, 318; life of, 404; 413, *cit.* 416, 417  
Lucretius, 415  
Man, transcendentalist view of, 112-113; Fiske on origin and evolution of, 210-216  
Mann, Horace, 217  
Marvin, Walter T., 413; *cit.* 417  
Materialism, in Witherspoon, 104-107; Parker on, 130-134, Hook's account of, 523-528  
May, Samuel, 113  
McConnell, Francis John, 222 n.; *cit.* 225  
McCosh, James, 217, 304, 411  
McGiffert, A. C., 4 n., *cit.* 7  
McGilvary, E. B., 220  
Mead, George H., *cit.* 317; life of, 319  
Meland, B. E., *cit.* 225, 490  
Metaphysics, James's list of problems in, 357  
Mezes, 220, 221  
Michelet, 262  
Mill, J. S., 234  
Miller, Perry, 2 n.; *cit.* 7  
Milton, John, 65  
Mind, Edwards on, 9-16; Johnson on, 42-47; Hocking on, 495-499  
Mind-body problem, Edwards on, 16, 31-32; Johnson on, 43, Porter on, 200-201, 302; James on, 349-350; Dewey on, 387; in modern realism, 411, Santayana on, 458-460  
Money, Franklin on, 73-74  
Monism, Creighton on, 302, James on, 365-367. *See also* Idealism  
Montague, William Pepperell, 412, *cit.* 416, 417; life of, 419  
Morality, Dewey on, 390-394. *See also* Ethics  
More, Paul Elmer, 475  
More, Thomas, 2 n.  
Morris, Charles W., *cit.* 318  
Morris, G. S., 217  
Motive, Edwards's definition of, 38  
Muller, G. E., *cit.* 6; 65; *cit.* 69, 225  
Munsterberg, 500  
Muirhead, J. H., 217 n.  
Mumford, Lewis, *cit.* 116  
Mysticism, Brightman on, 519-522  
Natorp, 491  
Naturalism, criticism of, by Bowne, 278-287; 413-416; by Babbitt, 475-485; by Brightman, 510-522

- Nature, transcendentalism and, 112-113; Emerson on, 141-148; causation and design in, 195-209; Fiske on unity of, 210-211
- Necessity, Edwards on, 39-40
- Neo-Realism, 224, 412
- Newton, Isaac, 2, 4, 5
- Norris, 2 *n.*
- Noumenon, Howison on, 267-269
- Object, Dewey's definition of, 386
- Object of thought, Royce on, 251-252
- Objective Relativism, Montague on, 429
- Options, forced and moral, James on, 370-375
- Otto, Max C., *cit.* 318; 413
- Ought, notion of, Royce on, 259-260
- Pacifism, Quakers and, 55
- Paine, Thomas, 65; 67-68; *cit.* 69; life of, 94
- Palmer, Elihu, life and thought of, 82
- Palmer, George Herbert, 65; *cit.* 225; 234, 472-474; 500
- Parker, Theodore, 68; 112; 113; *cit.* 116, on sensationalism, 130-134; on transcendentalism, 134-139
- Parrington, V. L., *cit.* 6; 66; *cit.* 69; 111; *cit.* 116, 193
- Paulsen, 262, 491
- Peirce, Benjamin, 330
- Peirce, Charles Sanders, 219; 312; 313; *cit.* 318; life of, 330; development of thought of, 330-332
- Penn, William, 5
- Percept, James on, 359-365
- Perception, Dewey on relativity in, 383-387
- Perry, C. M., *cit.* 224
- Perry, Ralph Barton, 224; *cit.* 225; life of, 304; criticism of idealism, 304-310; *cit.* 318; 411; 412; *cit.* 416, 417; 472 *n.*
- Personal Idealism, of Howison, 220-221, 262; of Bowne, 221-222, 278; 488-489. *See also* Bowne, Borden Parker and Brightman, Edgar Sheffield
- Personalism. *See* Personal Idealism
- Personality, Howison's definition of, 264-265; Bowne's definition of, 290
- Philosophy, definitions of, by Creighton, 300-301, by Dewey, 388-389; Mead on background of American, 319-329; Peirce on laboratory versus seminary, 332-333; Dewey's criticism of current, 376-390; Dewey on source of, 402-403; science and, Bowne on, 286
- Piety, Santayana's philosophic, 465-466
- Pitkin, Walter B., 412, *cit.* 417
- Plato, 2 *n.*; 76; Jefferson's opinion of, 80-81; 111; 222; on error, 238
- Pleasure and pain, Edwards on, 12
- Plotinus, 111
- Pluralism, James on, 365-367
- Poetry, Santayana on religion and, 463-466
- Pragmaticism, Peirce's theory of, 347-348
- Pragmatism, Royce's definition of, 246; Royce's criticism of, 246-261; historical sketch of, 311-316; James on religion and, 368-369; Lovejoy's criticism of, 404-410 *See also* James, William; Dewey, John; Peirce, Charles Sanders
- Pratt, James Bissett, 413; 485; 486; *cit.* 416, 417
- Priestley, Joseph, 65, 66
- Process, social, Mead on, 319-329; Dewey on, 378
- Profit, Quakers and, 57-58, 60-64
- Pulitzer, Joseph, 218
- Quakers, 5-6; pacifism and, 55; slavery and, 56-57; profit and, 57-58; 60-64
- Ramsdell, E. T., *cit.* 225
- Rand, Benjamin, *cit.* 7
- Randall, John Herman, 311
- Randolph, T. J., 76 *n.*
- Ratner, Joseph, *cit.* 318
- Rauch, Friederich, 217
- Realism, Royce's criticism of, 252; common sense, 411; modern, 411-413; Montague's history of American, 419-430
- Reason, Edwards on, 4, 27-29, 29-36; Santayana on, 458, 460-466, and understanding, Coleridge's distinction between, 112
- Reasons, causes and, Hocking on, 493-494
- Redemption, Edwards on, 17-24
- Reid, Thomas, 68, 206
- Relativism, Objective, Montague on, 429
- Relativity in perception, Dewey on, 383-387
- Religion, of Jefferson and Paine, 67; Franklin on, 74-75; Jefferson on, 76-80, James on pragmatism and, 368-369; Dewey on, 379-380, Santayana on, 415-416, 460-466; Babbitt on humanism and, 475-485; science and, 195-209, 210-216
- Renouvier, 222
- Responsibility, Dewey on, 396-398
- Revelation, Edwards on, 4, 27-29, 29-36
- Reymond, Du-Bois, 262
- Rickert, 491
- Riley, Isaac Woodbridge, *cit.* 6, 69, 116, 193; 217; *cit.* 225, 318
- Ripley, 111
- Rogers, Arthur Kenyon, *cit.* 116, 225, 318, 413; *cit.* 417, 490
- Romanticism, transcendentalism and, 111-112; Emerson on, 160-162, Rousseau and, 82, 475-476
- Rousseau, Jean Jacques, 82, 475-476
- Royce, Josiah, thought of, 219-220, life of, 234; on Kant, 235-236, on idealistic explanation of error, 237-246; on pragmatism, 246-261; 221; 223 *n.*, *cit.* 224; Mead on, 319-329; 411; 414; 419; 485; 486; 488; 491, 500
- Rush, Benjamin, 65, 76
- Russell, Bertrand, naturalism of, 413
- Ryle, Gilbert, 4 *n.*
- Sabine, G. H., *cit.* 225
- Sanborn, Franklin B., *cit.* 116
- Santayana, George, *cit.* 116; criticism of transcendentalism, 179-190; *cit.* 225, 318; 412; 413; naturalism of, 414-416, *cit.* 416, 417; 441; life of, 453; 475; 486; 500
- Satisfaction, Santayana on value and, 460
- Schantz, B. T., 67, *cit.* 69
- Schaub, E. L., *cit.* 225
- Schilpp, Paul A., *cit.* 318
- Schneider, Carroll, *cit.* 7
- Schneider, Herbert W., 2; *cit.* 7, 69; 117 *n.*
- Scholar, Emerson on the, 153-162
- Schopenhauer, 234

- Schurmann, Jacob Gould, 291  
 Schurz, Carl, 218  
 Science, Newcomb on, 196, 199-209; Bowne on philosophy and, 286, religion and, 195-209, 210-216  
 Scudder, Vida, 5  
 Self, Bowne on, 289, Dewey on, 316; Hocking on, 487-488  
 Sellars, Roy Wood, 412; 413; *cit.* 416-417, life of, 431; 486  
 Sense, Edwards on, 11-12, 30-32; Johnson on, 44-45.  
*See also* Realism, Idealism  
 Seth, James, 500  
 Shaftesbury, 65  
 Shepard, Odell, *cit.* 116  
 Sidney, 65  
 Silence, worship and, Woolman on, 59  
 Simmel, 491  
 Slavery, Quakers and, 56-57  
 Smart, Harold R., 291  
 Smith, A., 65  
 Snider, 218  
 Social factors in personality, Dewey on, 396-398  
 Social instinct, Royce on, 253-254, 258-259  
 Social nature of conduct, Dewey on, 396-398  
 Society of Friends. *See* Quakers  
 Sparks, Jared, 67, 72 *n.*, 117  
 Spaulding, Edward Gleason, 412; *cit.* 417; 486  
 Spencer, Herbert, 193, 210, 218, 221, 234  
 Spinoza, Baruch de, 2 *n.*, 415, 441  
 Stile, Benjamin, 67  
 Stiles, Ezra, 67  
 Stoddard, Solomon, 9  
 Stowe, Calvin, 217  
 Stratton, G. M., *cit.* 224; 262 *n.*  
 Strong, C. A., 413; *cit.* 417  
 Subject-object relationship, Dewey on, 381-387; in modern realism, 411-413  
 Sumner, William Graham, 199  
 Supernaturalism, Babbitt on, 479-485; Hook on, 528  
 Synchism, Peirce on, 347. *See also* Continuity  
 Tappan, H. P., 217  
 Teleology, Woodbridge on, 441-452; Brightman on, 518-522  
 Theology of Calvin, 1-4; of deists, 65-66  
 Thilly, F., *cit.* 225; 485  
 Things, Santayana on relative value of ideas and, 453-458  
 Thomas, M. H., *cit.* 318  
 Thoreau, Henry David, *cit.* 116; life of, 168; on governments and men, 168-172  
 Thought, Royce on activity in, 249-252; Peirce's definition of, 345-346; Santayana on, 458-460  
 Ticknor, George, 217  
 Tindal, Matthew, 29, 30, 33, 35  
 Toland, 65  
 Townsend, H. G., 4 *n.*; *cit.* 6, 7, 69, 116; 218 *n.*; *cit.* 225  
 Transcendentalism, birth of, 111; three chief factors in, 111; three points in creed of, 112; metaphysics of, 112-113; Emerson and, 113-115, Channing and, 117; Parker and, 130, 134-139, Thoreau and, 168, Whitman and, 173, Santayana's criticism of, 179-190  
 Trendelenburg, 217  
 Trent, W. P., 218 *n.*  
 Trinity, Unitarian view of, 120-122  
 Truth, Edwards on nature of, 13; Royce's definition of, 253, James's definition of, 353-356  
 Ulrici, 217, 278  
 Understanding, Coleridge's distinction between reason and, 112  
 Unitarianism, 2; 68; Channing's account of, 118-128  
 Unity, Bowne on, 287-288  
 Universality, Peirce's theory of impossibility of, 334-341  
 Use, Woodbridge on category of, 445-452  
 Utilitarianism, 65  
 Value (Values) Dewey on being and, 402-403, Santayana on satisfaction as touchstone of, 460, Creighton on relation of fact and, 298; Brightman on, 518-522  
 Van Doren, Carl, *cit.* 69  
 War, Quakers and, 55  
 Watts, 66  
 Weiss, Paul, 330 *n.*, 341 *n.*  
 Werner, J. G., 218  
 Whichcote, 2 *n.*  
 Whitehead, Alfred North, 486, 489  
 Whitman, Walt, *cit.* 116, life of, 173; on democracy, 173-178; Santayana on, 185-186  
 Wieman, H. N., *cit.* 225; 486; 490  
 Will, Edwards on, 3, 12-14, 37-41; Johnson on, 5; James on, 370-375; Dewey on, 393-394; Royce on, 249-251  
 Wiltse, C. M., *cit.* 69  
 Windelband, 491  
 Winslow, O. E., *cit.* 7  
 Witherspoon, John, 68; *cit.* 69; life of, 104; on mind-body problem, 104-106, on mind, 105; on God, 105; on will, 105, on affections, 105; on senses, 106-107; criticism of idealism, 107; ethics of, 107-110; 411  
 Wollaston, 4, 65  
 Woodberry, George Edward, *cit.* 116  
 Woodbridge, F. J. E., *cit.* 318, 413; 414; *cit.* 417; life of, 441; 475  
 Woolman, John, thought of, 5-6; bibliography on, 6-7; life of, 54  
 Worship, nature of true, Woolman on, 59  
 Wright, Chauncey, 312  
 Wundt, 217  
 Young, Thomas, 67  
 Zeller, 262